United Nations S/PV.5187

Security Council
Sixtieth year

Provisional

5187th meeting
Thursday, 26 May 2005, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Møller/Ms. Løj	(Denmark)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Baali
	Argentina	Mr. Mayoral
	Benin	Mr. Zinsou
	Brazil	Mr. Valle
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Philippines	Mr. Baja
	Romania	Mr. Motoc
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Manongi
	United States of America	Mrs. Patterson

Agenda

Post-conflict peacebuilding

Letter dated 16 May 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2005/316)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Post-conflict peacebuilding

Letter dated 16 May 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2005/316)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Australia, Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ghana, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Morocco, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland and Ukraine in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, the representatives of the aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. James D. Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank, who will participate in this meeting via videolink.

It was so decided.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2005/316, which contains a letter dated 16 May 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General.

I would like to open the debate by making a statement in my national capacity as the representative of Denmark.

This open debate on post-conflict peacebuilding offers an opportunity to discuss one of the key challenges that confront us. Peacebuilding is a multidisciplinary task involving many States and institutional actors, as well as many instruments. The diversity of stakeholders is reflected in the speakers invited today and in the wide interest aroused by the debate.

Under the auspices of the President of the General Assembly, discussions are currently taking place on the reform of the United Nations, including the proposal by the Secretary-General to establish a Peacebuilding Commission. Denmark sincerely hopes that those discussions will have a positive outcome.

The primary responsibility of the Security Council is the maintenance of international peace and security. The nexus between security and development and the importance of addressing both when building lasting peace are facts that we constantly need to keep in mind.

Denmark has issued a discussion paper for today's debate, which sets out some of the main challenges we see on the road ahead. I would like to elaborate on a few of them.

The aim of peacebuilding is, first and foremost, to ensure the transition from conflict to peace, development and reconstruction, and to prevent the recurrence of conflict. Efforts in the immediate post-conflict phase have often been too slow. We have already seen that insufficient international efforts in the post-crisis phase can result in a relapse into conflict. This is particularly true in Africa. If the international community is not able to act swiftly, the fragile peace is at risk, leading to a loss of more lives.

Although the United Nations has made progress lately in strengthening its coherence in post-conflict situations, significant challenges remain in the policy, institutional and financial fields.

First, on policy, we need to ensure local ownership of the process of devising and implementing post-conflict peacebuilding strategies so as to make them sustainable. Truly participatory dialogues between the United Nations and local stakeholders need to be developed to reflect the fact that the country in question and its people carry the main responsibility for their own future. This would also impose a responsibility on local authorities to cooperate with and facilitate access for the international community.

The regional perspective is often underestimated in the attempt to address a particular conflict. The solution is comprehensive strategies that address the specifics of the conflict and, when appropriate, deal with the regional dimensions. Such strategies must also include cross-cutting issues, such as small arms; demobilization, disarmament and the reintegration of former combatants (DDR); the protection of women and children; and the repatriation of refugees and internally displaced persons.

In West Africa, where soldiers of fortune, mercenaries, and sanctions-busters are taking their deadly business from one theatre of conflict to the next, we should focus more on tackling the cross-border issues by, inter alia, aiming for a comprehensive subregional strategy on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. Otherwise, there is a risk that the new DDR process in Côte d'Ivoire, which involves large cash handouts, will draw opportunistic ex-combatants from neighbouring Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Regional organizations in different parts of the world are taking on greater and greater responsibilities in the area of peacebuilding. This development should be welcomed and encouraged. We have seen the European Union taking responsibility. Now the African Union is taking on a greater role, particularly in the Sudan. It is important to involve the regional organizations and support them in taking a leadership role.

That is exactly what we have been doing, both bilaterally and through the European Union vis-à-vis the African Union (AU). We hope to see substantial contributions to the extended pledging conference for the AU Mission in the Sudan in Addis Ababa today.

Most post-conflict situations have what one might call a rule-of-law vacuum. The United Nations must be able to more effectively help fill this vacuum. A key prerequisite in this regard is building national judicial institutions, strengthening governance and ensuring transitional justice for crimes committed during conflicts. These efforts require both increased technical capacity and political will for reform in post-conflict societies. I commend the Secretary-General's leadership in that field, and would welcome thoughts on creating a focal point for the rule of law.

Secondly, on the institutional set-up, all relevant actors must be brought in. It is hugely important to ensure systematic contributions from United Nations development and humanitarian agencies in the United Nations integrated mission planning process for post-conflict situations under the auspices of the Department for Peacekeeping Operations.

We must make better use of the knowledge and experience already accumulated by the United Nations country teams. To this end, a system of recording and disseminating best practices should be devised.

The objective of coordination at Headquarters level and in the field is to ensure the best possible outcome through efficient use of available donor resources with no duplication of effort.

That leads me to my final point, on funding. All efforts at keeping and building the peace will come to naught if we are not ready to provide the operations with a sound financial basis. Failure to reintegrate demobilized and disarmed combatants and to provide them with an alternative livelihood is one of the most frequent causes of resumed conflict. Training, job creation and other measures aimed at general growth in post-conflict situations must be subject to much closer cooperation with the international financial institutions and the United Nations funds and programmes. We further believe that at least the initial costs of planning repatriation and reintegration should also be funded through assessed contributions.

The mandate of the recently approved United Nations operation in the Sudan serves as a perfect example of a well-integrated mission, where peacebuilding activities such as security sector reform, DDR, the rule of law and governance are given equal weight with military aspects such as ceasefire monitoring and separation of forces. It is, however, of key importance that the international community be ready to provide the funding pledged at the donor conference on 11 April in Oslo to initiate the implementation of these activities, particularly in southern Sudan. Otherwise the North-South Agreement may start to unravel.

To sum up, we need to develop peacebuilding strategies that, first, aim for local ownership and regional engagement; secondly, are coordinated between all actors in the field and at the Headquarters level and that make efficient use of the available resources within and outside the United Nations; and, thirdly, ensure sufficient financial means and long-term donor commitment.

I hope that our debate may serve to further strengthen the substantive case for establishing a Peacebuilding Commission at the September summit.

I now resume my responsibility as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the Deputy Secretary-General.

The Deputy Secretary-General: It is almost a year since United Nations troops arrived in Haiti. The Council sent them there to ensure a secure environment after civil violence erupted in the country. Armed gangs were roaming the streets. Police had abandoned their stations. Civilians had fled in fear of their lives. The combination of violence and floods had caused a near collapse of Haiti's already impoverished health and education systems. Three people in five could not get basic medical care.

The tragedy that unfolded last year in Haiti was bad enough. But it was made worse by the fact that we were witnessing history repeat itself. For this was the second time in 10 years that United Nations troops had been sent to Haiti to establish security in the country.

The unfortunate truth is that Haiti is not an anomaly. On the contrary, roughly half of all wars that come to an end relapse into violence. An organization such as ours, set up to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, must improve that record.

It is worth stressing, as the report of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (A/59/565) noted, that the surge in mediation, peacekeeping and humanitarian operations that followed the end of the cold war has helped to reduce the number of wars worldwide by almost 40 per cent. Indeed, more wars have been ended through mediation in the past 14 years than in the previous 200. Those are major accomplishments.

But our strategies for ending war must also tackle the question of relapse. We must ensure that peace agreements are implemented in a sustainable manner. We must make sure that critical stabilization activities, such as the reintegration and rehabilitation of demobilized combatants, are adequately financed and carefully implemented. We must help societies and markets recover their vitality. And we must strengthen the capacity of State and social institutions to provide security and justice based on the rule of law, an area where the United Nations can make a real difference and on which the Secretary-General is taking steps to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations system to provide rule of law assistance.

If we are to improve our peacebuilding success rate, four things are vital. First, we must make sure that we build on existing national institutions and capacities, both of the State and of civil society. National ownership is a vital foundation for sustainable peace and development.

Secondly, especially in our operations on the ground, the United Nations system must function in a coherent fashion. So too must its principal organs. In recent years, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council have each extended the scope of their activities in post-conflict situations. Both have critical roles to play.

Thirdly, the international financial institutions, bilateral donors and regional actors must all be involved in United Nations peacebuilding efforts. Their contributions are vital if post-conflict recovery is to be resilient and if the right foundation is to be laid for sustained economic recovery and political stability. That is why I am very glad that the Council had decided to invite Mr. James Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank, to join this meeting today.

Fourthly, both immediate needs and medium-term recovery require more resources. In the early post-conflict phase, funding for national institution-building, including rule of law programmes, is often inadequate. Financing for rehabilitation is unpredictable. And after the first two or three years, just as societies are beginning to develop the capacity to absorb resources and make the most use of them, financing tends to decline. These funding gaps are penny-wise and pound-foolish. When we do not invest adequately in peacebuilding, we find ourselves paying much more for renewed peacekeeping efforts down the line.

In his report "In larger freedom" (A/59/2005), the Secretary-General has proposed the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission, together with a Peacebuilding Support Office, to help meet these needs. The Commission would fill a gap within the machinery of the United Nations, and would focus attention on the vital task of peacebuilding. By bringing together the international financial institutions, bilateral donors and regional actors, it would harmonize peacebuilding activity across the multilateral system.

Peacebuilding is one of the most direct and vital contributions that the United Nations makes to freeing people from fear and want and enabling them to live lives in larger freedom. We have had important peacebuilding successes, but we have also seen too many failures. We must implement the lessons of the past and equip ourselves to create the conditions for long-term peace in societies emerging from conflict. And of course, we must also pay more attention to prevention so that societies can address their tensions and problems in ways that will avoid the descent into armed conflict in the first place.

I therefore welcome this debate on peacebuilding and hope it takes us a step further towards freeing more people from the deadly cycle of civil violence.

The President: I thank the Deputy Secretary-General for her statement.

In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members, I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than five minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate the text in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

I now give the floor to the representative of New Zealand. On behalf of the Security Council I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency, Mr. Phil Goff, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of New Zealand.

Mr. Goff (New Zealand): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for your initiative in organizing this meeting to discuss the challenges involved in peacebuilding. I would also like to also acknowledge the presence of Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette and of Michael Ambühl, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Switzerland.

Denmark has asked us today to consider the underlying problems and issues in peacebuilding, including the substantial policy, institutional and financial challenges. The comments that I am making today on behalf of New Zealand are based on our own experience in peacebuilding, particularly in the Pacific region, but also elsewhere, such as in Afghanistan.

First, to be successful, I think that peacebuilding has to be a long-term commitment. Peacebuilding is about creating sustainable social, developmental and governmental structures. Capacity-building and restoration of civil society takes time. That is as true in our Asia-Pacific region as elsewhere. The smaller scale of conflict does not make peacebuilding any less complex. Timor-Leste is a very clear example of the extraordinary range of functions which the United Nations had to undertake, and of the necessity for time to be allowed for local capacity to be developed in order to ensure that the transition was effective, as it has been. In Afghanistan, New Zealand leads a Provincial Reconstruction Team which has proven to be an effective mechanism combining security, development and capacity-building in the community.

I think we need to remember that in more than 50 per cent of conflicts the situation reverts to violence within five years of the peace agreement. Issues behind the conflict need to be dealt with or the conflict will return. If this does not occur, peace will only be sustained for the period of time that external forces remain deployed.

Secondly, peacebuilding requires flexibility. Different kinds of resources need to be committed, ranging from the deployment of military, police, justice and civilian advisers, to provision of aid and support for non-governmental institutions, including with respect to human rights.

Thirdly, sustainable peace depends on economic progress. Successful reintegration of ex-combatants requires sustained development assistance. Opportunities for work and a better life are necessary to draw combatants away from the cycle of conflict. However, I think from experience in the Solomon Islands and Bougainville we would have learned that payment for weapons buy-back can be counter-productive, as can be the concept of monetary compensation as against traditional customary reconciliation approaches. Throwing money at groups often tends to encourage problems, rather than resolving them.

Fourthly, peacebuilding requires cultural sensitivity. Greater ownership and capacity among local actors are needed for solutions to be acceptable, implementable and sustainable. Getting alongside the community in conflict situations, working with them in their own structures and acknowledging and acting on the validity of their own views is, in our experience, essential. The pace and nature of the peacebuilding process have to be in line with the culture of those concerned and the context within which it takes place. Regional approaches can be very important, as interventions in Bougainville and the Solomon Islands have shown, but adequate funding for regional missions is no less important than it is for international missions.

Fifthly, the role of civil society in peacebuilding needs to be given greater emphasis in policy development. The experience of the Pacific Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands and our experience in Bougainville is that community involvement — for example, through women's groups and church groups — provides an important avenue for the development of local ownership of the solutions. These groups have a critical ability to represent grass-root concerns in any given conflict and to grant legitimacy and "buy-in" as peacebuilding occurs. A further key strength of the intervention in the Solomon Islands, which has turned around from being a failed State to being a stable State, is that it was done not only with the full support of the Solomon Islands Parliament and Government, but also with all of the countries of the Pacific Forum that agreed on this intervention.

What lessons are there here for the United Nations membership and the Security Council in particular? New Zealand's view is that the practice developing in the Security Council of mandating "complex" missions, including policing, legal, human rights, governance and development components, is very positive, and we would encourage the Security Council to continue doing so.

We would also encourage the Security Council, and the United Nations Secretariat, to continue engaging to the fullest extent possible with national and regional neighbours on context-appropriate peacebuilding mechanisms. Peacebuilding strategies must be designed to fit the particular conflicts.

The Security Council should also consider the earliest possible coordination with other actors in the United Nations system so that planning for sustained and long-term peacebuilding can take place. In this context, I would like to put on record New Zealand's strong support for the proposal of a Peacebuilding Commission. A Peacebuilding Commission would provide a much-needed forum for institutional and political coordination between various arms of the United Nations system. It could mobilize existing resources, find new ones and provide much greater strategic coherence than we have now. Critically, it could also serve to deliver high-level political support so that we do not lose sight of those countries which are at risk.

Sustained, long-term commitment, tailored to local circumstances, is essential for successful peacebuilding. Peacekeeping, peacebuilding and development are mutually dependent and need to be addressed together. New Zealand strongly supports the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission and urges member States to give this proposal their full support.

The President: Mr. James D. Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank, who is unable to be in New York this morning, will be joining us via videolink, and we will now establish this link. I request the technician to connect Mr. Wolfensohn with the Security Council now. This is a novel way of doing things. He is here on the screen now. Welcome, Mr. Wolfensohn. I give you the floor.

Mr. Wolfensohn: I should tell you, Mr. President, that two of our buildings have just been evacuated because of explosions in the transformers, which were to set the scene for me for this meeting. This gives some idea of what post-conflict is like, and it just shows the attention to detail that there is in our institution — that we should create smoke around our building to give a sense of what we are talking about. I have vacated to another building, and I thank you for the invitation to join you.

Let me start by saying that the World Bank — certainly under my incumbency, which will last another five days, and, I strongly believe, under that of my successor, Paul Wolfowitz — is deeply committed to cooperating with the Security Council on the suggestions of the Secretary-General to have a Peacebuilding Commission, with which we would work closely. The reason for this is not just our admiration for the United Nations and for the Secretary-General; it is because all of us here strongly believe that it is essential to change the balance that exists between making peace, in terms of stopping conflict, and building peace, in terms of the creation of hope and viable States.

All of us in our institution recognize that, at the moment, the weighting is hugely and substantially on the military side, on the intervention side, on the prevention or the concluding of wars, but far too little is spent on winning the war of peace. The numbers are compelling, as I think the Security Council well knows, maybe better than anybody. Military expenditure accounts for $1,000 billion a year, including, sadly, more than $200 billion by developing countries, and that we spend maybe $50 or $60 billion on development assistance. Separate from that, of course, we still have the problems of trade that will be discussed later in the year in the conclusion of the Doha Round.

Thus, from our point of view, the issue of the transition from conflict to that intermediate zone in which we have worked together in so many countries, to the third area to which the Secretary-General has paid such attention, which is the building of peace, we recognize the interdependence between our institution and the various arms of the United Nations. Last night I read the Secretary-General's report of a couple of years ago on the prevention of armed conflict. As I read it, I was reminded again of the closeness of our perceptions of the issues when the Secretary-General pointed out that an effective prevention strategy requires a comprehensive approach and encompasses both short-term and long-term political, diplomatic and economic considerations.

It really is this line of thought that permeates the excellent report "In larger freedom", on issues of want, fear and dignity, in which the Secretary-General pointed again to a precursor to this notion of a Peacebuilding Commission.

To take the mystery out of this, let me say that the way we look at it is as follows. Whether a country is poor and peaceful, or whether, as in at least 50 per cent of cases, a country is poor and in post-conflict, exactly the same considerations prevail as to whether you can bring hope and economic development to those countries. The considerations are always the same. You must have a strengthening of capacity. You must have people in the country who can in fact run the country. In that context, the issue of capacity-building is essential.

Having said that, that particular problem is exacerbated in post-conflict situations because, very often, the people are not there or have been killed or because in-built antagonisms between one side and the other remain. So, putting together that first strand of capacity becomes critically important, and we must deal with that.

The second element, which, again, we often forget, is that you cannot have a viable State unless you have judicial and legal systems that can protect rights. That too becomes very important in post-conflict situations, where rights — whether physical rights, human rights or rights to contract — are very often tremendously weakened in the post-conflict period. But the second issue remains the same: establishing a form of legal order.

The third issue is that of re-establishing some sort of financial framework so that the people in the country can bring about investment, from micro-credit through to financing small- and medium-sized industry or, indeed, attracting outside investment.

The fourth precondition is making sure that you deal with the issue of corruption.

I note those four elements — capacity, legal and judicial systems, financial systems and corruption — because they pervade the reports of the United Nations itself, including the recent report, "In larger freedom" (A/59/2005), as well as being raised in earlier reports of the Secretary-General. It is therefore not surprising that we should come back to the issue of taking a comprehensive approach to development in the post-conflict arena.

For us at the World Bank, it has taken some time to recognize that the issues of post-conflict situations are the same as those of non-post-conflict situations. The same preconditions are needed for growth in all countries. We are not inventing something new for post-conflict situations. The problem is that in post-conflict situations, the capacity needed is much greater because of the after-effects of the conflict.

Of course, we have the additional issue of calming down the causes that may have generated the conflict. That is a fifth dimension we must address in our post-conflict work together. What caused the conflict? Was it inequity? Was it a desire for diamonds? Was it a desire for natural resources? Or was it long-term cultural differences? Whatever it is, it belongs to the political side, with which the Security Council is so familiar, but it becomes another condition precedent, exacerbating the problem of the post-conflict situation, as compared to normal development considerations.

After that, the issues of country ownership, of a comprehensive approach and of working together — the Council, the Bank and other agencies — to support a strengthened local Government and local ownership, are exactly the same. We must get local ownership. We must try and deal with that. And the issue here, so sadly true, is that the international community's attention span in bringing about longer-term and even medium-term reconstruction disappears when the bombs stop going off and the headlines dissipate because no one is getting killed. It is hard to photograph peacebuilding. It is easy to photograph wars. Peacebuilding does not get headlines. It is a long-term, tough, day-after-day activity.

It is that issue that I hope that the Secretary-General and those on the Peacebuilding Commission will be able to address in their work. My own judgement is that the solution is not rocket science. It is not something that requires doing doctorates in politics or economics. It is common sense. But it is a common sense that our world does not have. Our world does not give longer-term support to the turgid process of building States. That is a problem we face throughout the issue of development and one that I think we need vigorously to address with respect to the post-conflict period.

In conclusion, very simply, I believe that our analysis and the Council's analysis are very similar. We welcome the fact that the Secretary-General has identified the need for a Peacebuilding Commission. We welcome the opportunity to participate with the Security Council, and we think that together, we might be able to get your shareholders and our shareholders at the level of heads of State and, hopefully, at the level of the congresses and Governments to understand that what we are putting to them is not some radical new insight. It is common sense, and the world needs to have some of that if we are going to avoid more wars.

The President: I thank Mr. Wolfensohn for his common sense and his very good statement.

On behalf of the Security Council, I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Michael Ambühl, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, and I give him the floor.

Mr. Ambühl (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Mr. President, for giving me this opportunity to present Switzerland's position. At the outset, I commend you for convening today's debate on such an important issue, and I thank you for the stimulating document (S/2005/316, annex) that you have circulated as a basis for discussion.

The Secretary-General's proposal to establish a new United Nations peacebuilding architecture provides an opportunity that must be seized to help bring about three fundamental changes. First, the new architecture must facilitate the convergence of the security, humanitarian and development perspectives. Secondly, the United Nations system must better collate and take advantage of the experiences gained by all United Nations actors at the local, national and international levels. Thirdly, the new architecture must enhance predictability, transparency and accountability in United Nations peacebuilding activities.

Switzerland expressed its views on the Peacebuilding Commission and other institutional matters during the General Assembly's debates on chapters II and IV of the Secretary-General's report entitled "In larger freedom" (A/59/2005). Today I will focus on four strategic and substantive aspects that are especially important to us.

The first concerns the need for a coordinated, multidimensional approach. The process that leads a war-torn society to sustainable recovery is long and complex. Several objectives must be tackled simultaneously: security, humanitarian action, justice and reconciliation, social and economic development, good governance and participation. In order to be able to strive for those various objectives effectively and simultaneously, it is essential that all actors involved share a coordinated strategy.

Improved cooperation both at United Nations agency headquarters and in the field is required. However, there are limits to centralizing the management of operations. While no one disputes the Security Council's role and responsibilities in maintaining peace, the Council should not monopolize control of peacebuilding and reconstruction activities.

My second point concerns the involvement of national and local actors. Their participation is crucial for the success of peacebuilding activities. However, that involvement is often left up to the goodwill of the international actors. While the international actors may support that idea in principle, they often put it into practice in a limited fashion, merely undertaking consultations or failing to heed that principle completely. It is therefore important to strengthen United Nations capacity to promote national dialogue and to encourage the real involvement of national and local actors.

My third point concerns the need for partnerships with specialized institutions. Partnerships with independent academic institutions, civil society and the private sector are important for drawing on the best possible expertise. Switzerland welcomes the close collaboration of the United Nations with independent institutions, such as the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, the Harvard Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, and the International Peace Academy. We encourage the Security Council and the Secretariat to further strengthen such partnerships.

As a fourth point, I would like to stress the importance of an approach based on law.

Respect for the law is important for ensuring a sustainable peace process. Tensions may arise between the rule of law and accountability for past crimes, on the one hand, and power-sharing arrangements and reconciliation, on the other. However, we do think that a dialogue between all relevant stakeholders of a peace process can contribute to reducing those inevitable tensions. In that context, we support the Secretary-General's proposal to create a rule of law assistance unit in the Peacebuilding Support Office. The new unit should concentrate its work on coordination. Concrete activities to promote the rule of law are and should remain within the competences of the United Nations agencies working on the ground.

In conclusion, there are institutional and strategic challenges to face. The international community has a unique opportunity this September to create a new advisory body on post-conflict peacebuilding. The Commission will help to solve strategic challenges and to clarify the terminology, concepts and tools used in the context of peacebuilding. It could also provide advice on peacebuilding mandates, facilitate the coordination of actors involved at different stages of a peacebuilding and reconstruction process, and thus help to address an significant shortfall: the lack of policy coherence in peacebuilding and reconstruction.

Mr. Manongi (United Republic of Tanzania): The United Republic of Tanzania wishes to thank you, Sir, for organizing this open debate on post-conflict peacebuilding. We wish to recognize and appreciate your personal presence and that of Ministers Phil Goff of New Zealand and Mr. Michael Ambühl of Switzerland this morning. We also welcome the videolink contribution of Mr. James Wolfensohn, whose personal commitment to development and poverty eradication is greatly valued in my country.

The reform of the United Nations will not achieve the desired results if it is not accompanied by other measures to reinforce the Organization's capacities. The close interlinkages between security, development and human rights have revealed the imperative of an integrated approach to peacebuilding. It is therefore important that we examine how best we can promote peace and the sustained rule of law in post-conflict societies.

Lasting prevention means altering the conditions that give rise to conflicts. That is the centrepiece of peacebuilding: building peace by building good governance, meeting basic human needs and fostering social harmony. The United Nations has a commendable record in peacemaking and peacekeeping. However, it is weak in the area of peacebuilding, the problem being that, as currently constituted, it lacks an institutional framework to effectively address the challenge of helping countries transit from war to lasting peace.

It is in that regard that we support the recommendation of the Secretary-General to create an intergovernmental Peacebuilding Commission, including a Peacebuilding Support Office, within the Secretariat. We share the view that the Peacebuilding Commission should, among other things, improve planning for sustained recovery in the immediate aftermath of war, focusing on early efforts to establish the necessary institutions. It should also improve coordination of the many post-conflict activities of the United Nations funds, programmes and agencies.

We believe that the advisory and coordinating functions of the Commission should necessarily involve three integrated components: policy formulation, institutional partnership and resource mobilization. Of those, we wish to emphasize the value of institutional partnership because, even within the United Nations system, the Security Council is just one among the relevant players in peacebuilding efforts. The creation of the Economic and Social Council's Ad Hoc Advisory Group on African Countries Emerging from Conflict attests to that. The Advisory Group is instrumental in linking up the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council in areas of common concern related to peace and development. We are therefore in agreement with the Secretary-General that, in order to combine efficiency with legitimacy, the Peacebuilding Commission should report to the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council in sequence, depending on the phase of the conflict.

Outside the United Nations system, the Organization must work in unison with regional and international actors. The challenge here is how to build an effective partnership between the United Nations system and other actors for a well-coordinated role in peacebuilding. The United Nations partnerships with the African Union and such African subregional organizations as the Economic Community of West African States, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the Southern Africa Development Community have been quite exemplary in the areas of peacemaking and peacekeeping. That important collaboration must be extended in the area of post-conflict peacebuilding as well.

Coordinating resource mobilization is crucial because, without adequate resources, the reconstruction of political, economic, social, security, judicial and administrative sectors will not be possible. Currently, peacebuilding activities rely on voluntary contributions. Practical experience indicates that there is a lack of predictability in mobilizing adequate resources for peacebuilding based on voluntary contributions. It is important that a discussion on the divide between assessed contributions to peace operations and voluntary contributions be initiated. That will help to determine the best way of mobilizing adequate resources for peacebuilding activities.

It is in the context of coordinating resource mobilization that we welcome the proposal to establish a standing fund for peacebuilding. Such a fund should play a central role in resource mobilization. It should be not an alternative to international and bilateral donors, but a facilitator for additional resources for peacebuilding. One of its major functions should be to help ensure predictable financing for early recovery activities — an important stopgap measure to overcome delays in disbursement.

In resource mobilization, the standing fund must link up with regional and international financial institutions, particularly the Bretton Woods institutions. It is encouraging to note that the Bretton Woods institutions have become more responsive to the economic needs of the countries that have been disrupted by conflict.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to recognize the special attention that the United Nations is paying to African conflicts. Lastly, we want to thank you, Sir, once again for providing us with this opportunity to participate in this important discussion.

Mr. Mayoral (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me at the outset to thank you, Sir, for your delegation's initiative of convening this open debate on such a complex and important issue as that of post-conflict peacebuilding. I believe that the participation of those speakers who preceded me, and their statements, are commensurate with the importance that my country attaches to this item and with that which your country, Denmark, also attaches to it.

This is a timely initiative: to give an integrated response to conflicts, a response in which the concept of peacebuilding complements the traditional idea of peacekeeping. The evolution of the concept of peacebuilding reflects the close relationship between that concept and that of conflict prevention. What we have come to call peacebuilding aims both at eradicating the deep root causes of a conflict and at adopting a diverse group of measures intended to prevent the resurgence of the conflict.

What does the Charter mean when it speaks of the need to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of peace? Ultimately, in our view, this refers to peacebuilding.

We see the process of peacebuilding as an effort to internally improve the conditions for peace by strengthening a society's capacity to manage its conflicts without violence. In that context, in our view, we cannot lose sight of the fact that the elements of an appropriate strategy should include the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants; addressing the situation of refugees and displaced persons; the eradication of poverty; the promotion of sustainable development; the protection of human rights; and the strengthening of the rule of law and democratic institutions.

We consider all those fundamental concepts to be indispensable for planning any post-conflict peacebuilding strategy. However, an integrated strategy must take account of the specific characteristics of each country in conflict. No conflict is the same as another; only through deep knowledge of the causes of a conflict will it be possible to formulate a peacebuilding strategy.

I would therefore like to recall that in the Millennium Declaration (General Assembly resolution 55/2) we decided to make the United Nations more effective in maintaining peace and security by giving it the resources and tools it needs for conflict prevention, peaceful resolution of disputes, peacekeeping, post-conflict peacebuilding and reconstruction.

Peacebuilding is a long-term process that requires sustained action by the international community, as well as by all parties involved, donors and troop-contributing countries, with sufficient resources and a common and coordinated political will with respect to their activities in all phases from planning to implementation.

In such peacebuilding processes, the Security Council has the important role of coordinating the work of numerous actors and of avoiding unnecessary duplication, thus optimizing efficiency, especially with respect to regional organizations, international financial organizations and the affected States. In that regard, coordination by the Security Council with the Economic and Social Council in accordance with the provisions of Article 65 of the Charter has a fundamental role to play in the promotion of sustainable development.

With respect to the Secretary-General's report entitled "In larger freedom" (A/59/2005), we believe that it is extremely important to stress the cooperation and coordination that must exist among peacekeeping operations and the funds, specialized agencies and programmes of the United Nations system. Here, we believe that the role of coordinating the work of the various United Nations agencies, played in-country by the Resident Representatives of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with the objective of avoiding overlapping efforts or resources, must be coordinated with individual countries' policies for poverty eradication and for reaching the Millennium Development Goals. In our view, the guiding principles for such cooperation must be respecting the decisions of Governments, supporting and complementing their initiatives and not acting parallel to them.

The challenge before us is great: we must strengthen the capacity of the United Nations to prevent conflicts, to respond rapidly when a conflict occurs and to provide solutions for the building of a lasting peace. My country strongly supports that process and supports the present initiative.

Mr. De La Sablière (France) (*spoke in French*): I wish at the outset, Mr. President, to say how pleased and honoured we are that you have agreed to come and preside over the work of the Council today, which focuses on post-conflict peacebuilding, a subject to which, as we know, Denmark is firmly committed. We appreciate that commitment.

Later in the debate, the representative of Luxembourg will speak on behalf of the European Union; I support that statement. I wish only to add a few brief comments.

For many years, Members of the United Nations have been concerned about the fate of war-torn countries once peace has been restored with the support of a peacekeeping operation. In the 1990s, in Cambodia and in the Balkans, United Nations missions were already working — in addition to the work carried out by the various agencies — to build the peace that had been restored. Since that time, peacebuilding has become increasingly prominent in our debates. Many ideas have been put forward over the years with a view to refining the concept. Major reports have been written seeking to improve programmes of action in the field. And, indeed, there has been real progress.

To foster further progress, the Secretary-General has proposed the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission. France fully supports that proposal and hopes that it will become a reality during the September summit.

The theme of peacebuilding brings together many subjects of direct interest to the United Nations. Today, I wish to highlight two specific points.

The first relates to financing. Money not only drives war; it also drives peace. Peacebuilding has a high cost, which is generally spread out over several years. Many approaches have been envisaged to raise the necessary funds. The question of financing from assessed or voluntary contributions is at the centre of our discussion.

France believes that a clear distinction must be drawn between activities that can legitimately claim funding from assessed contributions and those that should be supported by voluntary contributions from Member States. A certain flexibility is necessary in this regard, and radical positions should be avoided. In all cases, funds that have been pledged or assessed must be disbursed expeditiously, because time is of the essence in post-conflict peacebuilding.

The second point I wanted to mention concerns the process of disarmament and reintegration of demobilized soldiers, the traditional DDR programmes that we find regularly in Security Council resolutions. In several cases we see that those programmes have not yet produced the hoped-for results. Beyond the question of financial resources, we can all do better. Coordination between the various agencies responsible for financing and carrying out those programmes could be improved; there must be better coordination among all the actors concerned. Among its many tasks the future Commission will, we hope, be able to facilitate that coordination.

Before I conclude my statement, I would have a couple of comments. We have already heard them here in the Council, and we think perhaps they make good sense.

The international community, on occasions such as today, must reaffirm its duty to help. However, it is also useful to recall that the primary responsibility for peacebuilding lies with the people emerging from the conflict. Sustainable peace, economic development, observance of human rights and social cohesion definitely need international assistance, but the sine qua non for success is that the people and their leaders mobilize and act together to obtain that goal. France will continue to concern itself with, and act for, recovering countries, as it has always done.

Mr. Valle (Brazil): First, let me say that my delegation highly appreciates your presence here today, Mr. President. I thank you very much for convening this timely and important meeting. I join previous speakers in welcoming you and Ministers Phil Goff and Michael Ambühl and Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette, as well as the statement by Mr. Wolfensohn.

Brazil is a traditional supporter of peacebuilding as an integral part of United Nations work, in particular of its peacekeeping operations. President Lula has been vocal in calling international attention to the fact that it is not only wars and terrorism that represent a threat to peace and security; poverty, hunger, infectious diseases, undereducation and underdevelopment are all equally threatening. The latter, in fact, threaten peace in two ways: by themselves and by their role in feeding or refuelling conflict. No set of sound policies can be adopted in our Organization in the absence of concrete advances in peacebuilding.

Due consideration should be given to transitional processes, and hopefully it has now become clear to us all that the international community cannot afford, either morally or financially, to allow countries to relapse into conflict. That is why post-conflict peacebuilding is so crucial. Peace must be made sustainable in the long term.

It is fascinating to note how our discussions in different forums become increasingly intertwined. If, for instance, we achieve the Millennium Development Goals, including the reduction of hunger and poverty, that will undoubtedly contribute to preventing conflict and its resurgence in many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa or Asia. All these issues, together with the need to reshape the Security Council in a way that better reflects the international realities, will converge in the September summit.

Official assistance to countries fighting poverty and resurfacing from conflict is much needed and must be stepped up. Beyond such assistance, the international community must also work together with the countries hosting peacekeeping operations to enhance their capacity to produce wealth and to generate income and employment.

In that larger context, the exploitation of natural resources is a crucial matter. Lately in this Organization, the concept of building ownership in areas such as security and the rule of law has been in vogue, and rightly so. It seems to my delegation that we have to be equally devoted to building ownership with regard to the exploitation of natural resources. Countries struggling with intra-State conflict or emerging from conflict are often rich in natural resources and face difficulties exploiting and managing those resources in the best interest of the people. That dimension should become a major part of peacebuilding efforts. Though it does not strictly fall within the purview of the Council, the Council's active support will certainly be needed.

As we recall the idea that all our discussions on peace and security are intertwined with the development agenda, it is never too much to stress that the international system should reflect the same principles that are domestically applauded. It must be democratic, from an economic standpoint. What we urgently need is a development-oriented international trade system, free of barriers, so that countries emerging from conflict are given fair opportunity to compete, especially in the area of agriculture.

In the more immediate areas of Security Council action, our vision for peacekeeping operations must be expanded to include certain aspects of reconstruction and of the reintegration of ex-combatants. We must increase our interest in and efforts for the development of quick-impact projects that can provide economic occupations, in particular to ex-combatants and, within that group, to the youth and the women. Those measures are either to be taken simultaneously with other peacekeeping activities or should start even before peacekeeping as such, as was the case in Darfur. As you stated in your paper — for which we are thankful, Mr. President — there is no "one size fits all" solution.

Promoting economic occupation is a key element of peacebuilding. But that does not exclusively mean creating jobs in labour-intensive enterprises; it may also be achieved through building capacity for self-employment, small businesses or craftsmanship. I would also like to reiterate, in that context, that special attention should be given to women — not only because of the horrifying crimes committed against them in conflict situations, but also because they are a powerful instrument of change, being the ones primarily able to pass on to their children morals and ethical notions and better practical education, including basic health practices. Assistance, support and capacity-building targeted at women are likely to make for enduring results.

To conclude, I would like to refer to the Secretary-General's report entitled "In larger freedom" (A/59/2005). It has provided the basis for many fundamental changes in the way we deal with crucial matters such as peace, security, poverty, armed threats and human rights from a conceptual as well as from an institutional perspective. It is for us to seize the moment and not shy away from our historical responsibilities.

Brazil believes that the Peacebuilding Commission proposed by the Secretary-General is one of the many important topics in that reform agenda. With adequate balance between the involvement of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council in its composition, as well as in its operation, and with active participation of the country concerned, it will be possible for such a Peacebuilding Commission to achieve meaningful results in a short time. Appropriate coordination among United Nations actors and the involvement of the international financial institutions are equally essential, and we welcome the important remarks just made by Mr. Wolfensohn in this regard. Brazil will work towards this objective and trusts the General Assembly will approve the much-needed reforms for this Organization.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Peacebuilding is a question that transcends the narrow context of peacekeeping, because it is a key factor in ensuring the lasting settlement of conflicts and the return to sustainable peace and stability.

Today peacekeeping operations aim not only to separate the parties to a conflict but also to eliminate those factors that could promote any resumption of hostilities. Measures that are already being taken include disarming troops and militias that are not recognized as legal; collecting the illegal weapons possessed by former combatants; and demobilizing and reintegrating the latter within their societies.

From time to time the Security Council has undertaken to create missions that are as integrated as possible, as demonstrated in the mission to be deployed in the Sudan. That task becomes easier when, as is the case in the Sudan, the parties to a conflict have previously negotiated and accepted a comprehensive agreement containing all of the elements conducive to ensuring peace, development and respect for the rule of law.

Peacebuilding involves the quest for equitable, reliable and credible solutions to the political, economic and social problems that are at the root of a conflict. That is a long-term undertaking that requires genuine political will at the local and sometimes regional levels as well as significant support from the international community.

The conflicts that our Organization is facing are generally the result of extreme poverty — the perfect breeding ground for fanaticism and violence. Extreme poverty is also conducive to the usurpation of power by force, the absence of democracy and, as a result, a lack of prospects for change, which, in combination with external factors, sometimes leads to a conflagration.

We believe that, in view of the unique character of each situation and of the absence of a mechanism for the formulation of a comprehensive strategy, any peacebuilding strategy should take a wider perspective and move beyond traditional peacekeeping activities to become part of an ongoing United Nations programme designed to rebuild a country and restore or rehabilitate viable and credible political institutions, so to ensure their support by the broadest possible segment of society, the rehabilitation of social structures and the establishment of the foundations for sustainable economic development.

To give this strategy every chance of success and to help the population to take charge of its own future, the United Nations must intensify its efforts to engage in genuinely participatory dialogues with local stakeholders, with a view to promoting power-sharing, consolidating democratic practices and creating the appropriate capacities to address the unique characteristics of every conflict situation. That means also that, when neighbouring countries are involved, they must support the effort.

Furthermore, including post-conflict peacebuilding elements in the mandate of peacekeeping operations should be seen as an operational measure — in other words, a move aimed at supporting the peacekeeping effort and preventing any conflagration or resurgence of the conflict.

We note with concern that funding for peacebuilding has not yet been placed on a solid and reliable footing. The mobilization of adequate financial and technical resources by the international financial institutions, and in particular by the World Bank, should be encouraged and pursued on a regular basis in order to ensure significant support on the part of those institutions for the international community's efforts. The other programmes and agencies of the United Nations system should continue to play an important part in providing expertise and resources while seeking better to coordinate their activities.

While the Security Council has the primary role in the context of operational activities, including in terms of the need for rapid decision-making, we must note that peacebuilding activities cannot be the sole responsibility of the Council. The General Assembly in particular has a crucial role which it must play, as does the Economic and Social Council, which must be brought in whenever the issues involved are related to social and economic development. Such collaboration would not only be consistent with the prerogatives that the Charter accords to each organ; it would also enable a greater number of Member States to contribute, leading to a more rational and effective handling of the issue.

However close such collaboration might become, it cannot — as experience has shown — satisfactorily meet the multiple, simultaneous and diverse challenges facing countries emerging from conflict. An intermediary organ between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council that would work closely with them — an organ created, set up and given a mandate by the General Assembly — could undoubtedly much better address the many dimensions of peacebuilding-related problems than the aforementioned organs have been able to thus far. The Peacebuilding Commission, which what we are dealing with here, is an organ that must be created. The sooner we can agree on its mandate, its composition and its place within the Organization, the better.

We must also note that efforts to coordinate peacebuilding, the mobilization of resources and the strengthening of the capacity of United Nations staff — or, in general terms, the creation of an international and local environment that is favourable to this type of action — are crucial components of any peacebuilding operation.

The regional dimension of peacebuilding calls for the same level of attention. The contribution of regional organizations under Chapter VIII of the Charter is of key importance, for peacebuilding is closely linked to conflict prevention.

In that context, the African Union, which is making an invaluable contribution to the prevention and settlement of conflicts on the continent, must be fully involved in any attempt to stabilize or build peace in Africa, because its experience, its skills and its knowledge of the local peoples and terrain as well as of the causes of conflict make it more qualified than any other entity to play an effective and useful role.

However, those requirements, however necessary they may be, should not overshadow another equally important imperative — consistent and scrupulous respect for the independence and sovereignty of the States involved in the process, principles that are clearly enshrined in the Charter of our Organization. If those principles are observed, United Nations missions will garner greater support throughout the world, and would gain, through such legitimacy and support, greater credibility and effectiveness.

Mr. Motoc (Romania): Madam President, I would like first to state our satisfaction at seeing the personal involvement of the Foreign Minister in steering this important meeting initiated by Denmark. My delegation welcomes the earlier participation of the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Louise Fréchette, and the statements made by World Bank President Mr. James Wolfensohn; the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of New Zealand, Mr. Phil Goff; and the State Secretary of Switzerland, Mr. Michael Ambühl.

Romania fully associates itself with the statement to be made shortly by Ambassador Hoscheit of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union, and I will therefore speak more briefly.

We are witnessing a growing perception that traditional conflicts are on a downward trend in the world. At the same time, challenges and threats to peace, security and stability are multiplying, stemming from a range of non-conventional sources, whether related to frail States, severe poverty, organized crime, terrorism or other factors.

Under such circumstances, post-conflict peacebuilding is clearly an immense task, to be shared by actors at the national level and — indispensably — the international community.

On this topic, there are three points that I would like to emphasize — and I must admit here that it would have been difficult to find many others, given the excellent and extremely thorough background paper prepared by the Danish presidency.

First, Romania advocates strong and — as much as possible — integrated peacebuilding efforts from the early post-conflict stages. In this context, "integrated" efforts refers to the need for coordinated responses from the full spectrum of players involved: local ownership, the United Nations and its specialized bodies and agencies, the international financial institutions and regional organizations, as well as bilateral donors and troop-contributing countries.

The Security Council needs comprehensive and strategic advice on the measures to take in order to ensure the effective transition from peacekeeping and peace support to sustainable peace and development, so that it is in a position to perform its full roll with regard to a conflict. In this respect, we welcome the Secretary-General's proposal on the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission. We trust that that initiative will be endorsed and that it will be implemented in a manner that will allow the future structure to be effective, meaningful and capable of delivering on the objectives set forth and of avoiding overlap and duplication.

Secondly, we believe that we cannot emphasize enough the key role played by regional and subregional organizations in peacebuilding. The mix of assets that regional and subregional organizations possess — targeted expertise, local knowledge and, in many cases, more accessible capabilities — make those organizations partners of choice for the United Nations, including with respect to post-conflict peacebuilding.

In the Council and elsewhere, Romania has constantly promoted cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. Enhanced cooperation and, where appropriate, coordination and consultation, between the United Nations and regional organizations are particularly important in peacekeeping and peacebuilding. They should be accomplished on the basis of a more integrated approach, and with the aim of maximizing the use of available resources and capabilities, which, if taken in isolation, will always seem scarce but, if considered jointly, are, possibly, more than adequate.

Furthermore, in line with Secretary-General's recommendations from his "In larger freedom" report (A/59/2005), particular attention should be paid to supporting capacity-building by regional and subregional organizations, especially on the African continent, where such efforts are needed and would pay off in terms of more effective cooperation in peacebuilding.

Thirdly, from our experience in the Security Council so far, it is possible to identify a number of "red threads" — key aspects for a successful peacebuilding approach. These have to do with the development of reliable democratic institutions; ensuring respect for the rule of law, justice and human rights; involving and strengthening civil society; and promoting economic and social rehabilitation and reform. Each of those aspects has its own particular merits in kick-starting a healthy post-conflict society. They all eventually apply, irrespective of whether a given post-conflict situation is or is not listed on the Security Council's agenda, the crux of the matter having to do, in our opinion, with the fact that no conflict should be allowed to linger without being addressed in a credible and effective way.

Mrs. Patterson (United States of America): With today's presidential statement, the members of the Security Council will demonstrate a renewed commitment to an improved post-conflict peacebuilding process. The United States welcomes this commitment with energy and enthusiasm. As Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said in February of this year, the United States is working to strengthen international capacities to address conditions in failed, failing and post-conflict States. At the same time, President Bush has charged us with strengthening our national capacity in this area through better coordination of our nation's post-conflict and stabilization efforts. Today's presidential statement will be an important first step towards improving the focus and organization of our peacebuilding efforts, and we appreciate the presence of the Danish Foreign Minister and the efforts of the Danish delegation in raising this significant issue during Denmark's presidency of the Security Council.

Failing or failed States and those emerging from conflict pose great challenges to international security. Without coordinated internal and international peacebuilding efforts, such States can become breeding grounds for terrorism, crime, trafficking in persons and other human catastrophes. The problems in such countries are infectious. They spread to neighbouring regions like a virulent disease, bringing chaos, misery and despair to the lives of millions of innocent civilians.

The United States has demonstrated its commitment to the post-conflict peacebuilding process, and we are working to further strengthen our capacity to contribute to international efforts in this area. A new Office of the State Department will lead, coordinate and institutionalize the United States Government's civilian capacity to prevent and respond to conflict.

The United Nations has long endeavoured to reduce the risk that nations emerging from conflict will fall back into a state of conflict. But, like all Governments and international organizations, the United Nations has enjoyed only limited success. There has been a distinct and counterproductive lack of coordination among United Nations peacekeeping operations, development initiatives, financing initiatives and other key elements of long-term peace and prosperity. For that reason, we welcome the Secretary-General's proposal to create a Peacebuilding Commission to improve the coordination of United Nations systems, policies and country-specific operations from the start of peacekeeping efforts through stabilization and reconstruction to development activities.

There has been a significant amount of discussion about where within the United Nations system the Peacebuilding Commission should reside and how it should function. We see the Peacebuilding Commission as an advisory body that operates on a consensus basis to provide both expertise and a coordination capacity to the principal United Nations bodies. It is vital that such a commission include in its membership both those with the most at stake and those with the most to contribute. Therefore, while the security of a country is on the agenda of the Security Council, the Security Council should be the United Nations body that invokes the Commission's structure, wisdom and capacity. We recognize, however, that the Peacebuilding Commission must extend beyond the Security Council. We agree with the Secretary-General that, once the Council determines that a post-conflict situation no longer requires its oversight, the Commission could so inform other United Nations organs and agencies — which will have participated in the Commission's work from the beginning.

There has also been a significant amount of discussion of how to fund peacebuilding and reconstruction efforts. The United States does not accept the overly simplistic solution of merely increasing assessed contributions to the United Nations. Such an approach is at odds with the budgeting process in the United States and elsewhere. For example, the expenses of demobilization efforts and the expenses of reintegration are funded from different parts of the United States national budget and therefore require a more refined approach to funding than that of simply increasing assessed contributions. The various aspects of peacebuilding are subject to different laws and different regulatory requirements, and their funding requirements must be analysed on a case-by-case basis. The challenge is for donor countries to make their funding mechanisms more flexible and responsive to the needs of post-conflict countries. As a major donor, my Government is currently working on means to increase the flexibility of our funding response mechanism.

While the United States looks forward to improving its own peacebuilding activities and is encouraged by the Secretary-General's proposal for a United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, we also recognize the critical role that hundreds of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and their dedicated staffs have had — and will continue to have — in the peacebuilding process. We will continue to establish strong partnerships with NGOs, including groups that advocate the rights of women, as well as think-tanks, private foundations, academics and operational experts, so that their collective capacity and knowledge can assist us in improving the lives of those living in regions emerging from conflict.

Finally, peaceful transition cannot succeed without local stakeholders. We at the United Nations should never view our role as paternalistic or didactic. We cannot allow key local groups to be sidelined or marginalized in post-conflict regions. While we on the outside can and must assist, we must remember that the impetus for development must come from within the country or region at issue. Democracy and freedom must come from within. Peace comes from within the spirit of a people seeking to put a dark past behind them.

The United States is the largest contributor to the assessed budget of the United Nations and the largest donor of development assistance, and it has the most generous private donors in the world, supported by a national tax system that encourages philanthropy. We remain committed to providing resources, in a monitored and coordinated manner, to all aspects of the peacebuilding process. We look forward to working with the United Nations, its Member States, regional organizations and local authorities in countries emerging from crisis, to further our mutual goal of seeking stable, democratic Governments in regions that have too long been ruled by oppression and conflict.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry (United Kingdom): Madam President, the presence of your Foreign Minister underlines the importance of this subject. May I thank the Deputy Secretary-General, and also Mr. Wolfensohn for his excellent common sense and the Honourable Phil Goff and Secretary of State Michael Ambühl for their contributions and insights. Of course, I thank all my colleagues for what they have said.

I align myself with the statement to be made later by the representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union.

The international community has had mixed results with its efforts to build peace. Mozambique has been a conspicuous success recently. That country, which until less than ten years ago was torn apart by war, is now one of Africa's fastest growing and most stable economies, and at the same it has reduced poverty by 15 per cent. But Haiti, despite successive peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions and more than $1.5 billion in international aid, is firmly on the agenda of the Security Council, not yet out of the crisis phase.

Why is it that our collective efforts in post-conflict countries do not always produce the result that we want: sustainable peace? What makes the difference between a Mozambique and a Haiti? While each country has unique circumstances that require a differentiated approach, there do seem to us to be general lessons that we can learn.

I would now like to highlight some of the challenges that we think the international community must seriously address if we are to do better at building more lasting peace in the future.

First, we need better strategic priority-setting and planning at the end of the conflict, and indeed when it looks as though the conflict is coming to an end. This is customarily set out in a comprehensive Security Council resolution. Increasingly, these resolutions tackle the range of issues relevant to a comprehensive peace-support operation — what the chair earlier described as the full range of cross-cutting issues. This tendency needs to be encouraged in order to reflect the indissoluble nature of security, development and human rights.

At the moment, realistically, the United Nations often lacks a single strategic plan for operations in a country that has just emerged from conflict. So all those involved, be it the United Nations Development Group, the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs or the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, need to be working on the same set of comprehensive elements. Integrated missions, where all elements of the United Nations work together in a coherent and coordinated way, are still not a sufficient reality.

Secondly, that integrated plan needs to be delivered by one responsible individual. The advantage of the post of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General is that this person should have the authority and resources to deliver all aspects of a peace-support operation, including welding together the work of the specialist agencies and giving strategic direction to a peacekeeping operation. The question is: do Special Representatives have the necessary training and experience to fulfil these roles? Are they recruited in a manner that ensures that we have the best talent available for this vital job? Do they have a clear set of objectives set by the United Nations Headquarters, with desired outcomes to work towards? I fear that the answers to those questions are invariably negative.

Thirdly, we need the right combination of national ownership and international support, as others have already argued. The international community has a moral duty to help States resolve conflict and a strong interest in seeing this succeed. But for peace to be sustainable, it must be owned and driven forward by the people of the country. It is therefore critical that national/transitional Governments and local civil society are involved from the beginning and help set priorities for peacebuilding and reconstruction.

Fourthly, it seems to the United Kingdom that we need better coordination and coherence within the international community. It is inevitable and indeed desirable, that many different international actors take part in peacebuilding, including, often, regional organizations. We therefore need to ensure that there is no wasteful duplication of effort or unhealthy competition on the ground. Instead, the different components need to make concerted, coherent and positive contributions. Hence the strong need for the proposed Peacebuilding Commission to permit all those interested in a given situation to come together, to identify strategy and then to deliver their individual contributions with maximum coherence of effort and minimum gaps and overlaps. And that, of course, leads directly into the role of what a Special Representative of the Secretary-General should be doing in theatre.

Fifthly, we need earlier, adequate and more predictable funding for peacebuilding, as many have already argued. Donor pledges for reconstruction often take six to nine months to arrive. But, as Mr. Wolfensohn reminded us, immediately a conflict has ended, financing is required, inter alia, to pay civil servants, the military, police, teachers, doctors and so on, as cash is invariably short for Governments.

Sixthly, we need to strengthen our collective expertise and human resources. It is much more difficult by definition to mobilize civilian experts. But their contribution is crucial, especially in the critical area of the rule of law, which can be the key to stability in the early phases of peacebuilding. Therefore we need to develop mechanisms to get the right civilian expertise into post-conflict situations much more quickly. The Secretary-General is working on a roster of experts in justice and the rule of law, and the European Union is developing similar rapid civilian deployment capacities, as are many Members States, including the United Kingdom. But these efforts need to be brought together so that we have an inventory of rapidly available capacity which can be launched as soon as they are needed.

Seventh, we need to sustain political will and attention until a country has made the transition to development and sustainable peace. Peacebuilding is a long-term effort; there are no quick fixes. The time horizon for transition is five to ten years, if not more. Yet studies show that post-conflict countries are most vulnerable to a return to conflict three to five years after the end of fighting. That is why, very simply, we have to sustain international attention and funding throughout that period into durable stability.

Lastly, while peacebuilding is crucial, it is only part of the conflict spectrum. Moreover, there is no regular sequence in which conflict ends, peace is re-established and stability ensues. The instruments of peacebuilding and the emphasis on rule of law and human rights can also be directly relevant to pre-conflict situations. Sustained effort is, therefore, necessary throughout the spectrum from potential conflict, to conflict to peacebuilding if we are to have less conflict to resolve.

It is becoming increasingly accepted that a breakdown in rule of law and increasing violations of human rights are reliable indicators of impending conflict. Regimes whose authority is questioned often cut corners on fundamental freedoms. This will generally deepen discontent and hasten conflict. If that is true — and there is a lot of evidence out there today that it is — the United Kingdom believes that it follows that a society underpinned by respect for human rights and the rule of law is essential for any post-conflict society to achieve lasting peace and stability. Fledgling democracies will carry the people with them only if basic freedoms are respected and if the Government is seen to work for the good and the development of all the people.

In conclusion, political will is key to success. It determines how well we react to a given crisis. Does the international community have the determination to resolve a particular conflict and then to make the real effort necessary to build peace in that country? More generally, do we have the willingness to put in place systems and to accept our global responsibilities to tackle the conflict spectrum as a whole and to be prepared to help build peace where necessary?

The summit in September in New York is the opportunity for nations to make it clear that we accept that responsibility to help countries become peaceful, rule-of-law abiding, democratic States, moving towards economic prosperity. The Peacebuilding Commission is a key aspect of that implementation. The challenge for the summit will be for heads of State or Government to make clear that the international community is prepared to accept this responsibility, and therefore to will the means to implement this commitment much more successfully.

Mr. Zinsou (Benin) (*spoke in French*): Madam President, thank you for having organized this open debate on peacebuilding, a topic of great importance with respect to the goals and purposes of the United Nations and, in particular, with respect to the Security Council's primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The question of peacebuilding arises above all in settling crises and internal conflicts and in preventing their resurgence. A review of the international community's contribution to managing post-conflict situations shows that there has been a true learning curve. We see three types of intervention: peacekeeping operations essentially focused on security issues and on opening up access for humanitarian assistance; peacekeeping operations that seek to help establish solid national democratic institutions; and multidimensional interventions based on a recognition of the need to attack the underlying causes of internal conflict, which are often economic and cultural and thus fall within the development field. Those three types of operations reflect an evolution in our Organization's practice, but they are dependent on structural limits relating to compartmentalization of the principal organs of the United Nations, which has led to the perception of interventions as either sequential or separate — in other words, a series of consecutive phases, from stabilization, to increased assistance for reconstruction, to the promotion of sustainable development.

When we talk about such a sequence, we have to think about harmonious transitions to avoid any gaps or relapses. The performance of the international community in this regard has been spotty, because there have been numerous cases of relapse, resurgent violence and renewed conflict. Processes of normalization have stagnated because of a lack of adequate support or an inability to get the next phases under way.

What we clearly see is a lack of harmonious streamlining among peacekeeping operations, humanitarian assistance and economic development assistance. The added value of today's debate, in our view, resides in our arriving at the appropriate conclusions about the limits of a sequential approach and identifying of the challenges posed by an alternative integrated global approach. Such an approach would involve simultaneous interventions and closer cooperation among the principal organs and institutions of the United Nations.

Another prime requisite is increased coordination of the activities of external actors that participate in peacebuilding. The coordinating function can be legitimately discharged by the United Nations in view of its universality and the legitimacy it enjoys. The challenge relates to the Organization's capacity to mobilize other international actors, in particular the funds and programmes and the international financial institutions. These have to be brought to support a comprehensive integrated strategy and to plan their contribution on the basis of a rational distribution of work based on proven comparative advantage. That is a way of avoiding duplication.

In this connection, the participation of various external actors in defining strategies would ensure their support and their genuine contribution to the implementation of the strategies. The logical consequence of this approach would be for the mandates of peacekeeping operations to be based on such an integrated strategy. The mandates would then become a reference point for structuring the objectives over the short, medium and long term. They could also provide a context of integrated coordination for taking wise advantage of the potential for synergy arising from increased cooperation from actors on the ground.

The adequate financing of and meaningful implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes is an essential component of peacebuilding. These activities should be carried out in such a way as to make the programmes a catalyst for social transformation laying the foundations for lasting stabilization in countries emerging from conflict and in their regions. We should offer ex-combatants, who are often unemployed youth, child soldiers and women victims of abuse a genuine economic alternative to war by giving them the possibility to participate in training programmes, to adopt a peaceful way of life, to earn a daily wage by finding well-paying civilian jobs and to acquire a culture of peace in the service of peace. These activities should be funded by the regular United Nations budget.

When it comes to local ownership of the peacebuilding process, it is important for the activities of the international community and, in particular, those of the United Nations, to strengthen capacity. When the complexity of a conflict is such that trans-border factors are involved, factoring them in can only help us achieve our goals. That is the case with the conflicts in West Africa, where harmful regional phenomena are exacerbated by the extremely mobile nature of problems arising out of the process of regional integration. Such a context urgently requires the adoption of a regional approach and enhanced cooperation with regional and subregional organizations in order to implement actions aimed at remedying the problems created by conflict.

In conclusion, we reaffirm Benin's resolute support for the Secretary-General's proposals with respect to the creation of a Peacebuilding Commission to fill the structural gap existing in the United Nations in regard to the coordination of action to promote international peace and security.

Mr. Baja (Philippines): I wish to thank you, Madam President, and your delegation for organizing this meeting. Peacebuilding is vital issue for the Security Council. The Council's work revolves around peacebuilding activities as countries emerge from conflict and undergo the process of peacebuilding and economic and social reconstruction.

The process of rebuilding and reconstruction following the cessation of conflict is a challenging and daunting task requiring the involvement of many sectors, both domestic and international. A country emerging from conflict needs the involvement of its citizen and every sector of its society. Local stakeholders need to acquire a deep sense of ownership of the peacebuilding process in order to achieve a stable and progressive future for their society.

Post-conflict peacebuilding also requires the active involvement and participation of the international community through a strong partnership among the Member States of the United Nations, the plans, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations, international financial institutions and civil society. All must work hand in hand to succeed and rid countries emerging from conflict of the scourge of further violence.

The complex nature of post-conflict peacebuilding requires a comprehensive mechanism that addresses its various facets. In that regard, the Philippines subscribes to three imperatives of all post-conflict peacebuilding activities: policy, strategy and resources — what we call the "PSR" of peacebuilding — which are defined by the complexity of the post-conflict process itself.

First, all post-conflict peacebuilding requires a clear policy or mandate to succeed. A clear policy emanating from the Security Council is necessary before any post-conflict activity is undertaken. That is in line with the Council's mandate under the Charter of the United Nations. A clear mandate from this body is necessary to put a stamp of legitimacy on the action on the ground and to stabilize the whole situation.

Secondly, it is essential to have a clear, coherent and comprehensive strategy that addresses the period extending from immediately after the cessation of conflict to the implementation of an exit strategy.

Based on the mandate, a clear strategy should be devised to address: first, the period immediately after the cessation of conflict, particularly the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process; secondly, the more extended period of political, social and economic rehabilitation and reconstruction, including the crucial aspect of coordination and cooperation between and among the various stakeholders within the United Nations system, such as the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly; and thirdly, the exit strategy for the period in which the United Nations-led involvement in post-conflict peacebuilding ends.

The latter should be undertaken only if and when the people have already been equipped with adequate financial and administrative support, as well as the human and technical capacity to enable them and their country to proceed on their own. A premature exit from conflict areas courts a disastrous slide back into conflict.

As well, in designing the second phase of post-conflict peacebuilding — political and socio-economic rehabilitation — the needs and the requirements of the people must be taken on board. Ownership of the plan and the design ensures a more successful post-conflict peacebuilding process.

Thirdly, adequate resources and support from all actors and the various stakeholders are indispensable. Financial resources are necessary to carry out the plans arising from the country's actual needs and requirements. The best of plans and intentions are futile without adequate resources to support them. In that regard, the Philippines is convinced that a voluntary revolving fund should be established for any post-conflict peacebuilding strategy.

Without a clear policy, the legitimacy of the action on the ground will come under scrutiny, potentially leading to more instability. Without a strategy, the whole process of post-conflict peacebuilding will proceed in an ad hoc fashion, with no clear guidance or direction. Without a clear plan, international actors will not be able to adapt their assistance to the political dynamics of the societies they wish to support. And without resources, the best of intentions will come to naught.

Peacekeeping has evolved from the traditional objectives of ceasefire and separation of forces into a complex weaving of elements working together to build peace in the aftermath of wars. The international community can draw lessons from its experience in Timor-Leste, where United Nations missions delivered on their respective mandates. Those missions enjoyed strong and broad support from local, regional and international actors.

The Philippines believes that if the proposed Peacebuilding Commission, which is now the subject of General Assembly debate, is given the right mandate or policy and the appropriate strategy or mechanism to carry out its tasks, and if it is supported by adequate resources and financing, it could very well supply the missing institutional link of a peacebuilding mechanism, which the United Nations system now needs in order to implement the imperatives that I have spoken of today.

Mr. Vassilakis (Greece): Thank you very much, Madam President, and congratulations for taking the initiative of organizing today's debate on post-conflict peacebuilding, an issue of great interest for the United Nations and of paramount importance to many nations in the world. You have been very successful in generating the necessary interest and support. The participation of your Foreign Minister, of Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette and of many other high officials from various countries and international organizations is tangible proof of that. We thank each of them for their participation and insights.

Greece fully aligns itself with the statement to be made by the representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union.

The end of the cold war created many hopes for peace and security. Unfortunately, violent conflicts emerged, threatening the lives of thousands of innocent people, as well as security, in many parts of the world, in particular in Europe and Africa. It soon became clear that the post-conflict rebuilding of war-torn societies is essential to prevent those countries from relapsing into conflict. The international community, especially the United Nations, took early note of that fact and strove to find ways to end that vicious circle.

The concept of peacebuilding arose to bridge the gap between security and sustainable development. Those issues have now become linked. The concept offers an integrated approach for dealing with a whole range of issues that relate to peace, security and development.

Many peacekeeping operations of the 1990s combined both peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities. The Brahimi report (S/2000/809) offered various recommendations for specific peacebuilding operations, such as the creation of a fund for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.

There is a growing international consensus on the importance of post-conflict peacebuilding and the need for its consolidation. As we all know, it is a multidimensional process. It aims at the consolidation of peace after the end of hostilities and the reconstruction and development of conflict-torn societies. It is the only way to prevent them from sliding back into violent conflict.

Contemporary conflicts around the world require more effective peacebuilding that would address the root causes of such conflicts, particularly structural, political, sociocultural and economic factors. More specifically, it should integrate the key elements of human security, political stability based on the rule of law and good governance, social reconciliation, and economic reconstruction.

We are convinced that a successful sustainable post-conflict peacebuilding outcome requires the active engagement of local ownership in the reconstruction process. Local actors, such as Governments, non-governmental organizations and civil society, must be involved in the political process and in setting the peacebuilding agenda. That is crucial for long-term and effective results. The capacities of local actors should be strengthened so that they can cope with future violent conflicts, enhance the commitment of local Governments to the process, and increase the presence of a well-organized civil society.

Furthermore, one should not forget local conditions that need to be taken into account in post-conflict peacebuilding agendas. It is essential, however, that effective post-conflict peacebuilding policies integrate institution-building, the rule of law, good governance and transitional justice, as well as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts.

That highly political process needs to be strongly supported by international actors. The United Nations, regional organizations, donors and other international actors can play a crucial role. They contribute to the implementation of peacebuilding policies.

There is a pressing need for better coordination among those international actors. They have to develop more effective strategies in assessing local needs, allocating recourses and defining priorities. Those strategies have to be well designed and correspond to local realities. Most importantly, they have to be long-term, since reconstruction itself is a long-term process. Rapid response is important in humanitarian assistance and human security situations, but long-term commitment is vital to securing development.

Another key factor for successful post-conflict reconstruction is the provision of financial support at an early stage. International actors have established post-conflict peacebuilding funding mechanisms in order to provide financial aid to countries emerging from conflict. However, it should be noted that neither available financial resources nor existing funding mechanisms are adequate to cover reconstruction needs at their starting point. Despite many efforts, there is a lack of sustainable and adequate funding, as well as a need for improved coordination. That requires better targeted, timely and coordinated financial support and the predictability of assistance.

It is our view that closer interaction and coordination between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council would be beneficial for sustainable long-term peace reconstruction. Likewise, the various departments within the United Nations — the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs — should find ways to better coordinate their peacebuilding activities. In addition, effective United Nations involvement requires a well-designed role for the resident United Nations coordinator.

In conclusion, Greece believes that post-conflict peacebuilding is a major priority for the United Nations system due to its contribution to international peace and security and its preventive effects on violent conflicts. In that context, Greece, individually and as a member of the European Union, supports the proposal of the Secretary-General for the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission. The creation of such a body will enrich the peacebuilding agenda of the United Nations and promote world peace, security and development.

Mr. Zhang Yishan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation thanks the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark for coming here today to preside personally over this meeting and for delivering his statement.

China also thanks Deputy Secretary-General Fréchette and Mr. James Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank, for their respective statements.

Post-conflict peacebuilding is an essential part of the process of restoring genuine peace and stability in countries and regions emerging from conflict. Past experience shows that, even when agreements are signed and ceasefires are in place, countries and regions may yet relapse into conflict or civil violence if post-conflict peacebuilding efforts lag behind. Consequently, lasting peace and stability can elude peoples in conflict regions.

As conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding are interrelated and mutually dependent, post-conflict peacebuilding must be preceded by peacekeeping. A return to violence must be prevented by means of peacebuilding to ensure stability and development in the countries and regions emerging from conflict.

On the specific question of peacebuilding, I should like to emphasize, first, that a comprehensive peacebuilding strategy must be formulated. When offering assistance to a war-torn country emerging from conflict and facing full-scale recovery and reconstruction, the international community should establish a targeted comprehensive strategy based on the specific needs of the country concerned. Since situations vary from country to country, the focus of such a strategy may range from accelerated reform of the security sector and the early commencement of disarmament to the demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants; from the reconstruction of national institutions and the improvement of governance to the protection of civilian interests; and from the re-establishment of the rule of law, the protection of human rights and ending impunity to the development of the economy to eliminate the root causes of conflict. The comprehensive strategy should be designed to stress all related areas in the process of post-conflict peacebuilding and to have a balanced approach.

Secondly, the lead role of the United Nations as the peacebuilding coordinator must be brought into full play. There are often many players nowadays in the field of peacebuilding, reflecting the international community's attention to and involvement in the post-conflict reconstruction of the countries concerned. They should therefore continue to be encouraged. However, given its experience and advantages in human resources and institutional mechanisms, the United Nations should enjoy a more central role in the coordination and collaboration of the specialized agencies, international financial institutions, troop contributors, the donor community and civil society in order to ensure the optimum impact of international assistance. Moreover, coordination between United Nations Headquarters and field missions should be enhanced and better focused in order to avoid overlapping and duplication.

Thirdly, the United Nations should assist the relevant regional and subregional organizations in developing their peacebuilding capacities. As the African continent is host to most United Nations peacekeeping operations, the region should also become a focus of the Organization's post-conflict peacebuilding efforts. The United Nations should not only help the African countries concerned to undertake reconstruction, but also strengthen its logistical, financial and technical support for the regional and subregional organizations of Africa in the light of the particular situation and special needs of the continent with a view to enhancing their overall capacity to provide assistance in the field of peacebuilding.

China supports the Secretary-General's proposal to establish a Peacebuilding Commission, which we believe would contribute significantly to post-conflict peacebuilding efforts, and especially to the achievement of lasting peace and stability in the conflict areas of Africa. We believe that the Commission should mainly be responsible for planning the transition from conflict control to post-conflict peacebuilding and for coordinating international efforts in that field.

We are in favour of creating a peacebuilding support office within the Secretariat that is both compact and effective. China is ready to join other Member States in further studying that issue in depth, so that consensus can be reached at an early date.

China endorses the draft presidential statement prepared by the Danish delegation. China also appreciates the efforts made by the Danish delegation.

Mr. Dolgov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. Minister, we are delighted to welcome you as President of the Security Council. We welcome the participation in this meeting of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of New Zealand and the Secretary of State of Switzerland.

The topic proposed by the delegation of Denmark for our discussion today is directly relevant to the activities of the Security Council and the United Nations as a whole. Experience has shown that the achievement of lasting peace and the resolution of regional conflicts are possible only when based upon a comprehensive approach that combines traditional diplomatic and peacekeeping efforts with the post-conflict peacebuilding of States emerging from crisis. Only in that manner can regional stabilisation and the non-resumption of conflicts be guaranteed.

The Russian Federation agrees with many of the assessments and points that have been put forward concerning that question in the statements by the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Fréchette, and the President of the World Bank, Mr. Wolfensohn. United Nations peacekeeping operations are becoming increasingly complex and multidimensional. The growing complexity of problems caused by contemporary conflicts, which often have a dangerous regional dimension and carry socio-economic consequences, requires that we keep focused on the task of improving overall planning and the deployment of multidimensional operations and that we enhance interactions with other international partners in their respective areas of responsibility.

In that context we should note that the experience of United Nations peacekeeping in Haiti, in Timor-Leste, in Africa — in particular in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia and Sierra Leone — and in other conflict areas has shown that there is an intrinsic link between the restoration of peace and the complete socio-economic rehabilitation of countries emerging from conflict.

Wherever the United Nations has been successful, even on a modest scale, that success has been largely due to the close coordination and integration of the military, political, civilian, humanitarian and reconstruction components of operations. That proves, once again, the growing importance of strengthening interaction between the Security Council and the other principal organs of the Organization that are directly concerned with peacebuilding — primarily the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council — as well as the specialized agencies of the United Nations.

Cooperation in the peacekeeping and peacebuilding areas needs to be deepened between the United Nations and the regional and subregional organizations, pursuant to Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. New positive examples of the development of that cooperation, in particular between the United Nations and the African Union in the Sudan, should be vigorously supported.

A comprehensive approach to post-crisis situations requires a seamless continuity in moving from one stage of peacekeeping to another. Political support by the Security Council is of great importance to peacebuilding efforts, particularly at stages when the central implementing role shifts to operational programmes and specialized funds of the United Nations, and to international and regional organizations.

The Russian Federation supports the idea of establishing a Peacebuilding Commission to enhance the coordination and effectiveness of post-conflict assistance to countries emerging from crisis. It is certain that the modalities for the functioning of that body will have to be carefully and collectively worked out, in order for it to be truly effective. The Russian delegation is prepared to engage constructively in that work.

The Russian delegation believes that the official statement of the President of the Security Council — the draft of which was kindly prepared by the Danish delegation for adoption at the end of today's meeting — contains a number of important points the implementation of which by the United Nations system and by its partners should make it possible to strengthen the peacekeeping achievements of the entire Organization and to strengthen stability throughout the world.

Mr. Oshima (Japan): My delegation is very grateful that the Danish delegation has taken the initiative to organize this open debate on post-conflict peacebuilding. We appreciate its participation in the debate and its guidance on this important issue.

One of the priority issues in my country's international assistance policy is its support for the consolidation of peace and for nation-building in countries emerging from conflict. Japan has long stressed the need for seamless assistance in the comprehensive settlement of conflicts. In particular, my Government believes in the importance of peacebuilding right from the earliest stages of conflict settlement. As a result, Japan has supported peacebuilding activities in Timor-Leste, Afghanistan, Iraq and various conflict areas in Africa.

Speaking from Japan's experience, one challenge we face in conflict resolution and post-conflict peacebuilding efforts is that there is no general template for handling all conflict situations. The same is true regarding the role of the United Nations in that area. For example, the United Nations had administrative control of Timor-Leste during a brief transitional period before independence. During that period, the United Nations was directly in charge of all peacekeeping activities on the island.

The United Nations policy in Afghanistan is called the light footprint approach. There, the United Nations has encouraged local leaders to take charge, while respecting the initiatives of other international participants. In Africa, the United Nations approach to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration issues has differed considerably from one conflict to another, taking into account the nature of each particular conflict as well as the local situation. The role of the United Nations in peacebuilding should be flexibly defined by the specific conflict situation and the roles played by other peacebuilding participants.

Among a number of important issues contained in the discussion paper for this open debate, my delegation would like to address three, namely, local ownership, a comprehensive strategy and integrated approach and, finally, financing.

Ownership by local actors must be encouraged and strengthened as much as possible. Japan fully agrees that self-help efforts by the local population are essential for the success of any peace agreement and should be respected.

In a similar vein, the success of post-conflict peacebuilding depends on having the locals in the driver's seat. The role of international assistance should be to provide support as necessary. There often arise situations, however, where the national Government is either in a state of collapse or not functioning at all. In such a case, it is imperative for the international community to take the lead in peacebuilding until a new Government starts to perform its role effectively.

However, we need to be aware of the risk of making the local aid recipients overdependent on international assistance. Projects aimed at local empowerment and capacity-building would help to prevent that from happening. In addition, peacebuilding projects should make the best possible use of local human resources and local ownership.

National Governments are not the only local partners for us. Even in conflict situations, traditional entities, communities and civil groups can sometimes play critical roles. I would like to recall the debate on the role of civil society in post-conflict peacebuilding that was held last June in this Chamber, when the Security Council praised the important role played by civil society. We should acknowledge the contribution that such groups can make and look for ways to cooperate with them. They are important partners in our peacebuilding activities. That is all the more true when a national Government is not functioning.

You, Mr. President, also raised the need to develop a comprehensive strategy and to integrate the activities of all the relevant actors. Cooperation and coordination among international participants in the peacebuilding process is indispensable to achieving those objectives. We should note that there are different levels of cooperation, depending on who the actors in question are, especially as the concept of integrated missions has been discussed actively at the United Nations of late.

First, within complex peacekeeping operations and peacebuilding missions, the activities of their different components must be adequately integrated, under the leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for the fulfilment of the mission's mandate.

Secondly, cooperation with United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies is also critically important. The Special Representative should be given authority to ensure effective coordination with these United Nations bodies. In undertaking such coordination, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General should seek to ensure the best possible division of labour, taking into account the areas of responsibility, advantages and degree of achievement on the ground of each of the United Nations bodies concerned.

Thirdly, outside the United Nations and its related organizations, the World Bank and other international financial institutions play an indispensable role in peacebuilding, and I thank the President of the World Bank, Mr. Wolfensohn, for his elucidating observations delivered via videolink.

We must also acknowledge that international non-governmental organizations and the International Committee of the Red Cross system also play very important roles in peacebuilding. These organizations often begin activities when a conflict is in its early stages. Therefore, they gain deep knowledge and broad experience in dealing with the conflict.

We agree that stable funding is important for peacebuilding. The comprehensive settlement of a conflict is bound to depend on peacebuilding activities continuing for a certain period of time and also requires financial resources. Peacekeeping is financed through assessed contributions and enjoys funding stability. By contrast, peacebuilding is mostly financed through voluntary contributions, which depend on the goodwill of donors. Simply turning to assessed contributions, however, is not a solution. If we financed all peacebuilding activities through assessed contributions, it would hinder not only the optimum allocation of financial resources but also local ownership in peacebuilding. It could also risk expanding and prolonging United Nations engagement beyond what is actually necessary. Therefore, we should discuss which types of peacebuilding activities should be financed through assessed contributions and which should be financed through voluntary contributions. This needs to be done on a case-by-case basis, based on existing divisions between the two in terms of scope, while taking into account the nature of individual conflicts and the situation on the ground. We should also consider mobilizing the private sector in the financing of peacebuilding efforts.

Before closing, let me raise the issue of the relationship between peacebuilding and human security. Japan has advocated consistently the idea of human security, which deals with threats from not only the point of view of State security but also from the human perspective. Its objective is to protect people from critical and pervasive threats to human life and to their livelihood and dignity and thus to enhance human fulfilment. Human security thus understood provides an important perspective for peacebuilding.

As stated in the report of the Commission on Human Security, which takes up the transition from conflict to peace as a priority issue, the response from the international community should take into full account the needs of people on the ground and of the local community. The success of peacebuilding and the transition from conflict to peace and development hinges on whether the idea of human security can be translated into reality, so that people are protected and empowered to stand on their own two feet.

In conclusion, the idea of a Peacebuilding Commission, as proposed by the Secretary-General, has Japan's strong support. My Government has made proposals in General Assembly discussions on how such a body might be set up and what its functions should be to ensure its effectiveness. We will spare no effort in working with other interested countries to ensure that a Peacebuilding Commission is established and can begin its work soon. That is the best way to address the important issue we are discussing today in concrete terms.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Luxembourg, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Hoscheit (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, your presence at today's debate, convened in such a timely manner by the Danish presidency of the Security Council, stresses the importance that we must attach to the subject that we are discussing today.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania, the candidate countries Turkey and Croatia, countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro, as well as Ukraine, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union fully recognizes the need to bridge the gap in United Nations machinery that exists between the end of armed conflict and the resumption of sustainable development through post-conflict peacebuilding. Experience has shown that peacebuilding activities are crucial to ensuring that countries emerging from war avoid any relapse into violence and conflict by assisting them in their transition to lasting peace and long-term development.

Post-conflict scenarios are complex situations calling for a comprehensive and coherent strategy involving a variety of different needs, actors and tools as well as a broad spectrum of activities such as the protection of civilians, disarmament, demobilization, the reintegration of combatants, security sector reform, reconciliation, the rebuilding of institutions and of basic infrastructures, as well as timely support for sustainable social and economic development, the establishment of effective and democratic governance, respect for the rule of law and human rights, and the full and equal participation of women, in accordance with resolution 1325 (2000).

While outside assistance can be indispensable in creating a secure environment, national ownership allowing for an early involvement, including at the planning stage, of actors at the local and national levels in post-conflict peacebuilding activities and their accountability for long-term development is equally indispensable. That will help ensure the sustainability of both the security environment and of subsequent peacebuilding activities. International efforts to foster ownership must build on local potential by using existing resources as early as possible in the process.

To avoid any relapse caused by cross-border interference, regional problems need regional solutions as well as policies based on a regional perspective. West Africa is probably the most telling example in that context. Regional and subregional organizations must participate in peacebuilding activities at the earliest possible stage.

One challenge related to peacebuilding is effectively to bring together the various actors, instruments and capabilities based on their comparative advantages. From the outset, special attention should be given to avoid any duplication between the activities carried out by integrated peacekeeping operations and those falling under the purview of United Nations specialized agencies and programmes, as well as to the early involvement of the international financial institutions. A further deepening of the dialogue and practical cooperation between the United Nations and other international or regional organizations, including during the mission-planning phase, is also needed.

The European Union, for its part, has used its development policy and other cooperation programmes to provide a basis for post-conflict reconstruction activities. These constitute powerful instruments for addressing the root causes of conflict and thus preventing their re-emergence. The European Union, which provides some 55 per cent of development assistance, 66 per cent of grant assistance and around 55 per cent of humanitarian assistance worldwide, must play — and is, indeed, playing — a lead role in addressing post-conflict challenges.

The European Union is also striving to consolidate post-conflict reconstruction processes worldwide — often in close cooperation with the United Nations or by supporting United Nations operations — through a range of activities, including institution-building, the rehabilitation of basic infrastructure, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities (DDR) and security sector reform, as well as through support for reconciliation and regional integration processes, human rights and democratization activities. But we can, and must, improve our focus and the effectiveness of our actions. We must be able to respond rapidly to specific situations and adapt our response to the particular circumstances, using the appropriate mix of instruments. In every situation there is a risk that the international community will assist only partly in the process. Ongoing assistance must be guaranteed, particularly with regard to DDR programmes.

In the area of civilian crisis management, the European Union is active in a number of priority areas. These include police training, since civilian police have an important role to play in post-conflict environments, promotion of the rule of law, strengthening civilian administration, civil protection and security sector reinforcement. Five operations, involving the mobilization of 1,300 personnel on the ground, are currently under way: police training missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and in two areas in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and a rule-of-law mission in Georgia. An integrated rule-of-law mission for Iraq will be launched in July 2005, through which some 770 people will be trained.

In order to address immediate needs, the European Union will need to further develop its capacity to deploy multifunctional civilian crisis-management resources in an integrated format and at short notice for use in the context of European Union-led autonomous missions or of operations conducted by other organizations, such as the United Nations or the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. A European Union rapid civilian-response capability could contribute added value to international peacebuilding efforts.

The European Union intends to develop its capacity to work more with the United Nations so as to assist countries emerging from conflict and will accordingly endeavour to link emergency relief, rehabilitation and development. We are also firmly committed to developing our cooperation with the African Union and subregional organizations. The European Union action plan in support of peace and security in Africa focuses on a number of practical actions that are largely oriented towards peacebuilding. In that context, the European Union will today submit to the pledging conference in Addis Ababa a comprehensive and substantial offer of support to assist the African Union's efforts in Darfur.

In order to bridge the gap between the end of an armed conflict and the achievement of sustainable development, and to ensure the formulation of a comprehensive and coherent strategy for peacebuilding in specific post-conflict situations, we need an institutional mechanism that involves all relevant actors. In this context, the European Union welcomes the Secretary-General's proposal to establish a Peacebuilding Commission and endorses the main purposes and functions set out in his explanatory note. The European Union also recognizes the importance of sustained, assured and predictable funding for peacebuilding activities.

Mr. Sen (India): We are appreciative of the fact that you, Sir, are personally presiding over this meeting. We also congratulate Denmark on its exemplary handling of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May.

We welcome this opportunity to participate in this debate to discuss the current policy and institutional and financial challenges in post-conflict peacebuilding without duplicating the General Assembly's deliberations on the possible modalities of a Peacebuilding Commission. In order to keep to the time scheduled, I will confine myself to essential points. Any consideration of the issue in the context of the role of the United Nations in post-conflict peacebuilding today cannot realistically be divorced from the proposal of the Secretary-General.

India's approach towards post-conflict peacebuilding is determined by its role as a major troop contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations and as an emerging non-traditional donor for reconstruction activities. As such, India has a keen interest in the issue, as it does in ensuring that the concept and implementation of a Peacebuilding Commission are well-defined from the very inception of the process.

We believe that the main functions of the proposed Peacebuilding Commission should be to ensure greater coordination between the international community and donor countries on the one hand, and national authorities on the other; to promote a sense of ownership among national authorities for the policies and programmes that are supported by the international community and donor countries; and to provide assured funding for the activities that are agreed upon as priorities by the national authorities and the international community.

Regarding its functions, in our view the Secretary-General's decision to restrict the scope of the Peacebuilding Commission's work to post-conflict peacebuilding, as opposed to the wider mandate, beginning with structural prevention, proposed by the High-level Panel, is rational and pragmatic. The main advantages of a narrower, better defined area of activity are that it would allow the Peacebuilding Commission to concentrate its resources, both personal and financial, in an optimal way. We also agree with the Secretary-General that the Peacebuilding Commission should not have an early-warning or monitoring function.

The proposal relating to core membership of the Peacebuilding Commission is not clear in terms of the proportion of representatives from the various interest groups — the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, donors, troop contributors — identified by the Secretary-General. Moreover, it is implicit, though not explicit, that members will be individuals nominated by their respective Governments — as in the case of the Commissioners of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, for example. No mechanism to determine the chairpersons of the core bodies or country-specific meetings has been specified.

The institutional structure of the Peacebuilding Commission needs to be defined clearly. The Secretary-General has proposed that the Peacebuilding Commission advise the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council in sequence, depending on the state of recovery. While this is functionally tenable, it does not take into account the fact that that important body would be answerable only to organizations with a select membership, not to the general membership. It is essential that the Peacebuilding Commission be made accountable to the General Assembly. That can be done without prejudice to its normal functioning, through periodic reports in which it must seek the guidance and approval of the General Assembly on policy issues.

Criteria on the basis of which a particular country under the Peacebuilding Commission would move from the Security Council to the Economic and Social Council need to be formulated. For example, the transition could begin from the time the Council starts a review of the force size of a peacekeeping mission. Ideally, the General Assembly could decide the transition through a review. It is somewhat unrealistic to set the transition from the Security Council to the Economic and Social Council only after the situation in a country is no longer on the agenda of the Security Council, as a country remains at times on the agenda of the Security Council for several years before it is removed on a no-objection basis.

We await the outcome of the Secretary-General's consultations on the participation of international financial institutions. Time and again, the best intentions and programmes for peacebuilding have been undermined by a lack of funds. The programmes are often based on commitments made by donor countries that do not translate into actual cash. The Standing Fund for Peacebuilding potentially offers a solution. The mechanism for sustainability of the Standing Fund and accountability for the contributions made to it need to be outlined carefully and agreed upon. It is, however, not clear whether the Standing Fund for Peacebuilding is solely meant to cover the gaps in funding, or would become the regular source for financing peacebuilding projects.

It is important to highlight the role of the proposed Commission in the context of proposing overall priorities, and to ensure that those priorities reflect country-based realities and to avoid repeating and reinforcing the existing paradigm of externally formulating policies and programmes for countries transitioning from conflict to post-conflict peacebuilding. The country-based realities component is perhaps the most important aspect of setting priority goals in order to avoid the same sequence in structure. The international community is setting goals which cannot be implemented, owing to a lack of understanding of the realities on the ground. It is therefore important to utilize the expertise of national authorities, in whatever nascent form it is available, to set priorities that the international community can support. In some cases, those priorities also have to be appropriately modified. That should be perceived as an essential part of the process of capacity-building as well.

The Peacebuilding Commission is required to perform the vital role of ensuring system-wide coherence. Any peacebuilding effort involves a number of actors, including representatives of the United Nations system, bilateral donors, troop contributors, regional organizations, international financial institutions and the like. However, in any post-conflict situation, there are a very large number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and relief agencies involved as well. One of the main drawbacks cited in post-conflict peacebuilding situations is the lack of coordination among the plethora of NGOs that compete for scarce resources, inevitably overlap in areas of activity and divert local assets, such as interpreters, trained personnel, etc., for their own projects, sometimes by paying extravagant sums, thus driving up the market rents and salaries. Perhaps the Commission should be mandated to attempt to provide a systemic coherence to all such post-conflict peacebuilding activities.

I have confined my statement to a few suggestions on the concept of a Peacebuilding Commission in the United Nations. Undoubtedly, this issue will be discussed at some length at the General Assembly, where different views on the modalities of the proposal will be aired. However, there is little doubt that the Secretary-General's proposal has sought to fill what he has described as "a gaping hole in the United Nations institutional machinery". There is also little doubt about the imperative need for and utility of such a body. India is fully supportive of the proposal and will be happy to engage constructively in discussions in the General Assembly on its establishment.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Mr. Dauth (Australia): I know we must be brief and thus must dispense with the courtesies, but it would be very wrong of me not to congratulate Denmark on its outstanding handling of the Council's work this month. It is typical of the wonderful work which my friend and colleague, Ambassador Løj, does here.

As the current debate recognizes, post-conflict peacebuilding is a crucial challenge facing the international community and entirely properly a focus of Security Council attention. Peacekeeping is often the prime focus of the Council's deliberations, but it represents only the start of a longer-term progress towards peace, stability and prosperity in conflict-affected areas. As history and bitter experience show us, even the best peacekeeping efforts can come to naught if post-conflict peacebuilding is neglected. In that regard, Australia has warmly welcomed the recent successful end to United Nations peacekeeping in Timor-Leste and the creation of a successor mission with a strong peacebuilding mandate.

It is important to remember, however, that peacekeeping and peacebuilding are not necessarily the endpoints of a linear process — they are interlinked, interwoven and, at times, interdependent. Planning for peacekeeping must recognize that peacebuilding often needs to start before peacekeeping ends. Clearly, peacebuilding is not easy. Indeed, building peace — including strengthening State institutions, re-establishing law and order and creating prosperity — can often be more difficult than ending the war.

Peacebuilding must be a multifaceted and comprehensive exercise across the full scope of development, security and human rights — I mention human rights very deliberately — reflecting the interconnected nature of issues and the complex challenges facing post-conflict societies. It must also place strong emphasis on developing local capacity and encouraging ownership of peacebuilding activities. Others have spoken of this. In that regard, partnership and close consultation with affected communities and the early delivery of a peace dividend to consolidate ongoing community support are vital.

Security sector reform, encompassing police, corrections and judiciary, is an important element of peacebuilding and can often be the key prerequisite for rebuilding shattered economies and restoring social services. To be effective, however, peacebuilding must also address longer-term economic and social development issues. Peacebuilding must be able to determine and address the sources of conflict, be they poor access to government services, a breakdown in traditional authority structures or uneven economic opportunities, which are the factors that underline that good governance and soundly based economic policies are important components of peacebuilding.

Regional peacebuilding is a vital complement to the work of the United Nations. In our own region, initiatives such as the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) provide valuable examples of how peacebuilding works in practice. Initiated in July 2003 as a common Pacific Islands Forum response to a direct request for assistance from the Solomon Islands, RAMSI has enjoyed remarkable success and benefited from direct contributions of personnel from some 11 regional nations to date. The Solomon Islands' call for assistance posed a key peacebuilding test that the nations of our region, under the framework of the Forum's Biketawa Declaration, met with collective resolve. The RAMSI experience has also highlighted the value of taking an integrated and sequenced approach to peacebuilding, coordinated between all security and development actors and in close collaboration with the affected country.

Not least, given our experiences in our own region, Australia welcomes the current proposal for a Peacebuilding Commission and believes that close coordination between the Commission and the Security Council would be vital to ensure that the United Nations is well placed to assist post-conflict societies. The creation of a Peacebuilding Commission would also offer the opportunity to coordinate and foster a far more effective international response capability and would enhance the integrated mission planning process. In addition to post-conflict peacebuilding, prevention of conflict remains an important objective, and we should continue to do our utmost to strengthen the United Nations conflict prevention and mediation capacities, including through the Security Council and the good offices role of the Secretary-General.

The President: I thank the representative of Australia for his kind words to the presidency.

There are still a number of speakers remaining on my list for this meeting. I intend, with the concurrence of members of the Council, to suspend the meeting until 3 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1.10 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5187 (Resumption 1)

Security Council

Sixtieth year

Provisional

5187th meeting

Thursday, 26 May 2005, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Møller/Ms. Løj	(Denmark)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Djacta
	Argentina	Mr. García Moritán
	Benin	Mr. Zinsou
	Brazil	Mr. Sardenberg
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	France	Mr. Poirier
	Greece	Mrs. Papadopoulou
	Japan	Mr. Kawakami
	Philippines	Mr. Montealegre
	Romania	Mr. Dumitru
	Russian Federation	Mr. Leplinskiy
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Lloyd
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Manongi
	United States of America	Mr. Olson

Agenda

Post-conflict peacebuilding

Letter dated 16 May 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2005/316)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

05-36171 (E)

The meeting resumed at 3.15 p.m.

The President: I wish to remind all speakers, as my Foreign Minister indicated this morning, to limit their statements to no more than five minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate the text in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

The next speaker is the representative of Morocco, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Bennouna (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Moroccan delegation, I wish at the outset to thank you, Madam President, for your initiative to convene this debate on a question of such importance to the international community: peacebuilding. My delegation is pleased to note that peacebuilding remains a central concern of the United Nations system. Moreover, we are very pleased that, under your presidency, Madam, the Security Council will be making a major contribution to the reform of the United Nations.

This question was indeed given special attention this year, during the consideration of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005). As we all know, the report contains a proposal to establish an intergovernmental Peacebuilding Commission. Many among us believe that the proposal could well become the object of consensus.

The nature of most post-cold-war conflicts — which more often than not are based on ethnic, cultural or religious confrontation — means, even if those conflicts are subsequently internationalized, that they can have a devastating effect on the societies concerned. Hence, once United Nations efforts have succeeded in stabilizing a situation and putting a complete end to hostilities, it is very often necessary to tackle the daunting job of peacebuilding, in which former combatants must learn how to behave as new partners. They have to learn to join political parties or bodies working for human development.

To achieve that, the short-term and medium-term support of the international community is essential in order to ensure the success of that delicate transitional period from the cessation of hostilities to the building of social consensus with the participation of all, with everyone assuming his or her rightful role. Rebuilding takes time, and it must take account of a series of often complex and interdependent factors such as disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and rehabilitation; security-sector reform; establishment of the rule of law; and good management of natural resources.

When a country emerges from conflict, the first challenge relates to the rule of law: formulating appropriate, coherent norms and providing the resources needed to implement them; establishing procedures for the settlement of disputes; and putting in place the appropriate judicial structures. If the conflict had been a theatre of serious crimes against human peace and security, it is essential that the perpetrators of such crimes not go unpunished. Here again, the international community must provide assistance to ensure due process, either through international, joint or national tribunals, and with the possibility of establishing what have come to be called truth and reconciliation bodies provided with the necessary guarantees. By "necessary guarantees" we mean that certain guarantees should be attached to any amnesty that may be offered, apart from the compensation provided to victims. In our view, the right mix of those elements to combat impunity would make it possible to deal with crimes committed on a massive scale.

Another challenge in any peacebuilding process lies in the area of democratization and good governance. Although we now agree on the goal of democratization, without which there can be no true sustainable development, we must take account of historical and cultural factors when determining the pace of democratization in any given society. We all have our historical baggage to carry.

Unfortunately, many conflicts also revolve around the control of or access to natural resources. Accordingly, the main effort during the reconstruction phase or the peacebuilding phase has to be focused on dismantling war economies and on managing natural resources in the best interests of all of the people.

In the relationship between the State concerned and its neighbours — we have many examples of this and the Council has tackled the most important examples, such as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo — the certification of certain precious commodities can be established. Monitoring mechanisms can be established in the United Nations in order to put an end to major transnational trafficking in these commodities.

In recent years, the United Nations has, it is true, acquired a wealth of experience in peacebuilding, through a number of difficult undertakings, particularly in Africa. The majority of peacekeeping operations, decided on by the Security Council, today increasingly include a peacebuilding component. The multitude and diversity of stakeholders, however, make it difficult to elaborate a real strategy here. Interventions by various United Nations institutions — the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, bilateral donors and other non-governmental organizations — each acting in its area of competence, very often lack coherence. Peacebuilding activities are not coordinated with development cooperation activities, and this is an area where we believe that the United Nations can do better in terms of being effective at a time when many are talking about the need to improve the management of the Organization.

However, this is a complex task, because none of the bodies within the United Nations system has an exclusive peacebuilding mandate. Governments that emerge from peace agreements need some time, and they need support properly to play their role of interlocutor vis-à-vis the international community — quite simply, to become legitimate.

Peacekeeping operations decided on by the Council are given the necessary funding from assessed contributions, but this is not the case when it comes to peacebuilding activities, where resources are neither stable nor predictable. Furthermore, the pace of fundraising for peacebuilding programmes is often slow and is not in keeping with the urgency felt on the ground. The delays that we have seen in disbursements by financial institutions have often been a major obstacle to rapid action, notwithstanding the often very generous pledges made at various fundraising conferences. There are many examples — Sierra Leone, Liberia or Haiti, in particular, which the Council was discussing just yesterday. These problems must be resolved by designing better strategies whereby all stakeholders can participate right at the beginning of the peacebuilding effort, in particular as soon as the date has been set for the holding of elections, as in the case of Côte d'Ivoire or in Haiti. Financial and technical assistance should also be planned for, so that the structures that emerge from the elections can function normally and live up to the expectations of the people.

Otherwise, there will be democracy, but there may also be a failure of democracy. Frequent regular meetings between the major donors, troop-contributing countries, financial institutions and the Governments concerned must take place in order to assess the situation and to elaborate strategies.

Very modestly, my country, pursuant to its commitment to South-South cooperation, is entirely prepared to make a contribution in terms of the necessary technical assistance to be provided, for example by sending experts to help countries in the South and enabling them to benefit from our experience in development. Of course, the mandates of peacekeeping operations need to be more ambitious. They should include more peacebuilding activities, particularly during protracted conflicts.

We are aware that there is no clear line of separation between peacekeeping and peacebuilding. This is the doctrine of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Rather, we are witnessing a gradual process where, for some time, peacekeeping and peacebuilding will coexist.

The Secretary-General's proposal to establish a Peacebuilding Commission is an initial response to this question inasmuch as it provides an institutional framework to enable the various stakeholders to act together, target their activities and make them complementary. The peacebuilding fund, the shape of which is still vague, will, if it is set up, provide an appropriate response to the question of the unpredictability of resources.

We all know that there is broad consensus to establish this Peacebuilding Commission which, according to Morocco, should be attached to the Security Council and to the Economic and Social Council. And why not also to the General Assembly, if the international community so decides? In that body, donors, financial institutions and experts should cooperate to make a success of the transitional process in countries emerging from conflict.

When I say cooperate, it is not just the rich that cooperate; it is the rich and poor working together, achieving unity to help the poorest among us in the international community.

Morocco hopes that our Heads of State and Government will give their agreement to the principles that will govern the future Commission, which will be a symbol of a chain of solidarity among countries and between generations.

The President: The next speaker on my list is the representative of Iceland, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Hannesson (Iceland): Let me begin by thanking the Foreign Minister of Denmark for taking part in and presiding over the open debate this morning on post-conflict peacebuilding. I would also like to thank the Danish presidency for the useful discussion paper on this important subject.

A year ago, when James Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank, addressed the Security Council, he reminded us that the first question of conflict prevention is to have a growing economy in which people share. He also referred to the remarkable World Bank study, *Voices of the Poor*, which made it clear that people in poor and conflict-ridden countries want to live in peace. They want opportunity and empowerment, not charity.

The complex links between conflict, peace, development and security call for a multidimensional and multisectoral approach to peacebuilding. By addressing the root causes of conflict through reconciliation, institution-building and both political and economic transformation, durable peace can be established and the recurrence of conflict prevented.

Local ownership, coordination of international efforts and harmonization of procedures are all essential for results. Additionally, regional organizations can play an instrumental role in bringing about long-term peace.

The discussion paper provides an excellent overview of the key elements of peacebuilding efforts. I would like to focus my comments on one issue: the importance of the rapid and targeted deployment of civilian experts for a successful transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding and subsequently building the foundations for long-term development.

For a number of years, the Government of Iceland has operated a programme for the rapid deployment of civilian personnel to peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions. The programme, called the Icelandic Crisis Response Unit, maintains a roster of civilian experts who can join international missions on short notice.

Our experience shows that there are many well-qualified civilian experts who are willing to be deployed on short notice to areas in which conditions are extremely challenging and for which, in the past, the international community has deemed military missions to be the only feasible option.

We therefore believe that there is significant potential for further developing that approach, and we are pleased to see the idea of developing such a mechanism for the United Nations raised in the discussion paper. We are also aware that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has been exploring that approach, and we strongly encourage the United Nations to continue that work actively.

Experience in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Afghanistan, Kosovo and Sri Lanka has taught the Icelandic authorities the importance of finding a niche where we have a comparative advantage. As a smaller Member State, we seek out projects where we can bring special expertise to bear.

In addition, allow me to mention five basic principles that we have drawn from our experience in the field. First, a mission must be well defined, with a clear strategy and clear objectives. Secondly, the involvement of the local population in both the planning and the implementation phases is highly desirable and in most cases is a prerequisite for a successful outcome. Thirdly, the prospects of sustainability must be emphasized at all stages, and civilian experts must demonstrate a strong will, motivation and the ability to transfer their technical expertise and practical know-how to their counterparts. Fourthly, partners must coordinate and cooperate at all levels to avoid the inherent failures of approaches that are insufficiently coordinated. Finally, a long-term perspective is important, because efforts should always be made to outline an exit strategy from the very beginning of a peacebuilding operation.

The termination of a conflict does not guarantee sustainable peace. A comprehensive and long-term peacebuilding operation is a necessary continuation of a successful peacekeeping process. I am certain that the discussion here today will cast valuable light on how the United Nations can continue to improve its approach to peacebuilding.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming what we have already said in the General Assembly: Iceland fully supports the proposal of the Secretary-General to establish a Peacebuilding Commission.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): Allow me to congratulate you, Madam, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of May.

This debate is certainly timely in the context of our ongoing collective effort to strengthen the capacities of the United Nations to assist countries emerging from conflict to attain lasting and durable peace. There is general agreement that addressing the long-term needs of countries emerging from conflict requires a high degree of coordination and coherence among the various international actors supporting peacebuilding.

Peacebuilding goes beyond disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and beyond giving the necessary assistance to refugees. It also involves longer-term needs such as reviving the economy, rebuilding infrastructure, strengthening the rule of law and establishing democratic institutions. Addressing those long-term needs is vital if we are to prevent a recurrence or a slide back into conflict. In other words, if the United Nations is to be successful, there needs to be a focal point that deals with peacebuilding in a comprehensive manner.

In his report entitled "In larger freedom" (A/59/2005), the Secretary-General too acknowledges that significant deficits remain in the planning, financing and implementation capacities of the United Nations system. As a result, he has proposed the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission.

When a conflict is at its peak, there is usually a myriad of interventions, starting with the involvement of the Security Council in carrying out its mandate for maintaining international peace and security. Once the conflict subsides, all the interventions gradually disappear. Yet, experience has taught us that this is the most critical stage of conflict resolution since it is a stage when peace agreements are most fragile and need to be consolidated.

The challenge we face in our own African-led peace initiatives is gaining the necessary political, moral and material support from the international community to ensure an effective transition from immediate security and humanitarian needs to long-term development, which is a prerequisite for sustainable peace.

Over the past several years, both the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council have come to recognize the importance of comprehensive and long-term strategies for peacebuilding. The establishment of the Economic and Social Council's ad hoc advisory groups on countries emerging from conflict, designed initially for Burundi and Guinea-Bissau and, more recently, Haiti, bear testimony to that awareness. We also note with appreciation that the Secretariat has tried to exert efforts to ensure a common approach to the work of United Nations agencies, particularly those operating in conflict countries.

However, as we have learned in both Burundi and Guinea-Bissau, for conflict resolution to be effective, there is a need to engage other role players, such as international donors and the Bretton Woods institutions, which already have their own programmes in support of peacebuilding. The challenge is to harness the efforts of all role players early enough to ensure coordination from the start. Because it often takes donors a long time to give critical support to countries that have just emerged from conflict, particularly in the context of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, it would be important for the United Nations to take responsibility by financing that important step from assessed contributions until such time as other resources are secured.

We believe that the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission would go a long way towards bridging those gaps, and we have therefore supported the Secretary-General's proposal for the creation of such a mechanism. Countries in post-conflict situations face significant challenges to the establishment of lasting peace. Failure to properly address those challenges could precipitate further conflict or result in a sharp decline in social and economic progress. If strategies to deal with those challenges are to be effective and successful, they have to be comprehensive in nature and address the root causes and negative consequences of the conflict.

We wish to reaffirm that the United Nations has a vital and fundamental role to play in post-conflict situations. It is the only organization that has the unique experience of helping people rebuild their countries after the ruin of armed conflict. We believe that the proposed Peacebuilding Commission can provide the much-needed coordination.

We welcome you, Mr. Minister, to New York. Your presence indicates how important this issue is.

The President: I thank the representative of South Africa for his kind words.

I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to welcome you, Mr. Minister, in our midst here in New York as you preside over this meeting. The delegation of Egypt appreciates your timely initiative to convene this meeting, which will help strengthen constructive dialogue on the proposals for enhancing the United Nations role in peacebuilding and in addressing institutional gaps in the multilateral mechanisms that are needed following a peace agreement and during the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding.

It is our view that the Secretary-General's proposal in the context of United Nations reform to establish an intergovernmental Peacebuilding Commission reflects the realities and results of and changes in armed conflict, especially in Africa. In that respect, I should like to offer certain thoughts as our contribution to this discussion on the dimensions and framework of the peacebuilding issue, particularly in its institutional manifestations.

First, the United Nations has had notable successes in conflict situations, such as in Angola, Mozambique and Guatemala, not to mention its ever greater success in addressing such delicate and complex situations as those in Sierra Leone, Kosovo and Timor-Leste. That reflects the need for common political will among all parties to a conflict, the international community and regional Powers to overcome crises and meet the challenges of establishing peace and stability.

Secondly, a peacebuilding contract is based on the fact that security and political cooperation in the post-conflict phase cannot be successful without a comprehensive framework for addressing the social and economic dimensions of the conflict. The establishment of such a comprehensive framework must begin at an early stage of a peacekeeping mission so as to allow the implementation of all its components and elements in a timely manner, as soon as relative security has been ensured, and with continuity and sustainability when the mission has fulfilled its mandate. It is therefore necessary to identify the coordinating role of the United Nations agencies and regional Powers concerned and to agree on a schedule for drawing down a peacekeeping mission and moving on to the phase of social and economic development.

Thirdly, experience has exposed the limitations of the Security Council's vital role in the maintenance of international peace and security. Those limitations have become apparent in situations in which conflict has resumed, most notably in Liberia and Haiti. Although the Council invested much time and effort in those conflicts, it was unable to provide sustained international attention and support for the work of rebuilding the State and addressing the social and economic root causes of the crises. Indeed, we cannot imagine how the Security Council could find the time, energy or even the capacity to coordinate the roles of all the relevant United Nations political and development bodies, mechanisms and agencies, nor can we conceive its assuming the functions of the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly and other bodies endowed with special mandates under the Charter.

Most of the United Nations inability to deal with post-conflict situations is due to the blurring of the lines between peacebuilding and peacekeeping and between the mandates of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, not to mention the roles of the international financial institutions and donor countries. The proposal to establish the intergovernmental Peacebuilding Commission is important in that respect, as it would be a focal point for coordinating the roles of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council pursuant to their respective mandates and the Charter, as well as the roles of the specialized agencies and the international donor community. In that context, I would stress the importance of the proposal to developing countries in particular, given that Africa, inter alia, is looking to the United Nations to play a central role in peacebuilding. In that context, I would emphasize the following criteria.

First, the Commission should act at the official request of the concerned State or interim authorities for its assistance. Second, the nature, timing and scope of assistance should be determined in accordance with the specific needs of any given State. Third, the

Commission's mandate should be limited to post-conflict situations, and especially to meeting direct and urgent needs in the areas of rehabilitation, reintegration, reconstruction, national reconciliation, and in particular the strengthening of institutional and human capacities. Fourth, the Commission should make every effort to avoid duplication and to distribute its resources equitably. Fifth, criteria and conditions should be identified for determining the end of a Commission mission in any given State. Sixth, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council should be entrusted with monitoring the Commission's work, pursuant to their respective mandates. Seventh, representatives of the Secretariat, the United Nations agencies and programmes, international and regional financial institutions, national and interim State authorities, and regional and subregional organizations should be invited to attend the Commission's meetings in order to coordinate their roles and avoid duplication.

The delegation of Egypt has distributed integrated proposals to all Members of the Organization in relation to the implementation of the idea of establishing the Commission, based on the United Nations peacebuilding activities. The Egyptian delegation is motivated by its dedication to the idea of genuine reform of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Security Council and the Secretariat. The High-level Meeting in September will adopt many institutional reforms, and that endeavour should be accompanied by the extensive reform of all agencies and organizations whose work is linked to that of the United Nations in addressing multilateral challenges in all fields and in meeting collective security requirements in their broadest possible definition and in all their political, security, economic and social dimensions, taking into consideration existing mandates and the need for complementarity in their implementation.

The President: I now call on the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine): Ukraine fully aligns itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union.

We welcome today's debate as a logical continuation of a number of discussions held by the Security Council over the past several years on subjects related to peacebuilding. We also recognize the additional relevance and value of this discussion in the light of the ongoing deliberations in the General Assembly and elsewhere on the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission.

My delegation would like to thank the Danish presidency for convening this timely and very important meeting and for the submission of the focused discussion paper for today's debate. We are also grateful to the Deputy Secretary-General and the President of the World Bank for their important and thought-provoking statements today, and to the high dignitaries taking part in today's discussion.

Ukraine welcomes the fact that the issue of peacebuilding is becoming increasingly topical for the United Nations. Indeed, the United Nations peacebuilding efforts are in great demand all over the world. It is a well-known fact that almost half of all countries that emerge from war lapse back into violence within a few years.

Rebuilding the State and its institutions, establishing effective and democratic governance and the rule of law, as well as ensuring an environment of security to help countries in transition from war to lasting peace requires a comprehensive approach to peacebuilding.

In our view, such an approach should take into account the existing links among conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding and should thus be aimed at preserving the results achieved and preventing the recurrence of armed conflict. It should also be based on an understanding of the interdependence among sustainable peace, security and development. Obviously, the implementation of such a comprehensive strategy requires effective interaction, cooperation and division of labour among all international partners including the relevant United Nations bodies, Member States, international financial institutions, non-governmental organizations, local stakeholders and other players.

The Security Council undoubtedly has an outstanding role to play in peacebuilding efforts, especially in the immediate aftermath of a conflict. The Council has already undertaken to include peacebuilding elements in the mandates of peacekeeping operations in order to ensure a smooth transition to a successful post-conflict phase. At the same time, we believe that when a country approaches the phase of moving from transitional recovery towards long-term development, it is the Economic and Social Council that should take over the leading role in coordinating the relevant activities of the international community.

I would also like to acknowledge the important role of the General Assembly in mapping out general peacebuilding strategies, as well as that of the Secretary-General. Considering the complexity of peacebuilding activities, there can be no one-size-fits-all recipe. Each given situation requires dialogue and cooperation among a number of actors, including local stakeholders. Fostering local ownership is an important element of ensuring the sustainability of peacebuilding efforts. Early involvement, where necessary, of regional and subregional organizations would also contribute to the goals of peacekeeping.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate Ukraine's support for the creation of a Peacebuilding Commission. In our view, the Commission could fill the institutional gap in the United Nations and help to overcome many existing challenges in the United Nations peacebuilding machinery. Ukraine supports, in principle, the Secretary-General's proposals and ideas as to the functions and modalities of that body and hopes that the decision to establish the Commission will be among the major outcomes of the United Nations summit in September 2005.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia.

Mr. Rastam (Malaysia): I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on presiding over today's meeting and to congratulate your delegation on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council this month. I should like to thank your delegation for taking this timely initiative to consider issues of post-conflict peacebuilding in an open debate of the Council with the participation of the larger membership of the United Nations.

My delegation has taken note with keen interest of the statements of the Deputy Secretary-General and the President of the World Bank.

My delegation extends its sincere appreciation to Denmark for the non-paper on post-conflict peacebuilding (S/2005/316, annex), which provides a sound basis for today's discussion. We are particularly impressed by the comprehensive and thought-provoking approach in the non-paper highlighting very important and relevant questions related to current policy, institutional and financial challenges in post-conflict peacebuilding.

My delegation fully subscribes to the view that the United Nations should play a key role in post-conflict peacebuilding in order to prevent the resurgence of conflict, help countries put back in place the foundations of normal life, and move societies towards sustainable peace. That normally involves a multifaceted process and a multidimensional mandate covering a full range of issues and activities.

Clearly, there are major policy, institutional and financial challenges that need to be addressed. That would require policy coherence and better coordination involving the United Nations, the parties emerging from conflict, local stakeholders, international institutions, donors and other actors. It is important to ensure that there exists an adequate and conducive enabling and supporting environment. In that regard, we welcome the consideration of possible regional approaches to meeting the challenges of post-conflict peacebuilding.

Malaysia concurs with the view that each post-conflict situation generates its own unique set of circumstances. There is no single peacebuilding model that can fit all situations. The United Nations has to tailor its activities to specific situations on a case-by-case basis. We agree with the view that ways must be found to ensure greater ownership and capacity among local actors to ensure a more acceptable, implementable and sustainable post-conflict peacebuilding programme.

In that regard, due attention must be given to local norms and values, cultural and religious traditions and capacity to respond. By now, the United Nations and the international community have had sufficient experience to put together best practices from past situations to deal with future challenges. We would support consideration of establishing a civilian rapid deployment mechanism consisting of judges, administrators, police and election observers on a stand-by basis for United Nations missions.

Malaysia is fully cognizant of the need for a comprehensive strategy in promoting peacebuilding efforts. Currently, however, there is no clear institutional mechanism for the formulation of such a comprehensive strategy. We think that the ongoing deliberations in the General Assembly on the possible modalities of a Peacebuilding Commission and other reform proposals can help clarify and redress the institutional deficit.

Malaysia welcomes and supports the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission. However, I wish to reiterate our view that, without any prejudice to the competence and roles of the other principal organs of the United Nations in post-conflict peacebuilding activities, the General Assembly must also have the key role in the formulation of post-conflict peacebuilding activities. The implementation of post-conflict peacebuilding activities requires full consultation with and the consent of the parties concerned and should be based on the principles of international law and the United Nations Charter.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Norway.

Mr. Løvald (Norway): My delegation welcomes Denmark's initiative to hold this very important open debate. In our view, there are four broad gaps in current peacebuilding doctrine and practice. These are: the lack of coherent planning of broad peacebuilding operations; the lack of sufficient clarity of the activities and cooperation among all actors in the field; the lack of coherence among actors involved in peacekeeping, humanitarian and long-term development efforts; and finally, the lack of adequate coordination within the United Nations system.

The proposed Peacebuilding Commission and the corresponding Peacebuilding Support Office will go a long way in addressing the aforementioned shortcomings. We also believe that the Peacebuilding Commission could serve as a most useful tool for enhanced donor coordination and interaction.

In order to forge stronger cooperation among the United Nations actors involved, key leadership and management issues need to be addressed. As far as the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General are concerned, their mandates need to be clarified. Also, roles, functions and modalities for cooperation among the various United Nations actors in the field must be more clearly specified.

Finally, the need for a more integrated United Nations at the country level must be combined with the need to reflect the conceptual and operational divisions among military, political, humanitarian and development-oriented action.

The United Nations has both a comparative advantage and a clear role to play in peacebuilding. Its experience in conflict areas and its technical expertise are unique.

Furthermore, the United Nations is present before, during and after a conflict and is thus well placed to provide assessments of, and strategic planning for, peacebuilding efforts. For the United Nations to play that role, close and continuous cooperation between all relevant parts of the system is necessary.

A sound division of labour, based on comparative advantage, among Secretariat units, funds and programmes, and agencies is the only viable approach. However, the various aspects of peacebuilding are interrelated, and competencies and relative advantages may vary from country to country. Thus, a clearer division of labour cannot replace the need for close and flexible cooperation among the various United Nations actors.

It is our view that we also have to look beyond the United Nations itself. It is neither realistic nor desirable for the United Nations to be the only provider of technical expertise to broad peacebuilding operations. Regional organizations should be given important roles. The division of labour between the United Nations and regional organizations should be based on the principle of subsidiarity. In that context, donors should also revisit their funding formats to facilitate long-term cooperation at the regional level.

Assistance is often negligible during the most critical period after a peace settlement. That persistent funding gap needs to be addressed as an integral part of the overall response to post-conflict peacebuilding. It is our view that all activities included in the mandates should be financed by assessed contributions.

In addition to the limitation of funds, the funding rules and regulations of agencies do not support the flexibility that complex peacebuilding efforts demand. A standing fund for peacebuilding, as proposed by the Secretary-General, could, if properly designed and adequately funded, help substantially in addressing that problem.

There is little chance of institutionalizing democracy if peacebuilding itself is not democratically organized and accountable to local partners. The involvement of local actors in peacebuilding policy-making is also crucial to assist in ensuring a better match between assistance and local absorptive capacity. Swift assistance in establishing key State functions and institutions is crucial in that regard. This has to be supplemented by support for civil society at an early stage of the post-conflict phase. Externally funded community projects supporting socio-economic development are necessary in order to provide a sense of purpose to communities divided by conflict.

Finally, we need to be more creative in identifying ways and means to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). True local ownership implies the involvement of entire populations. Efforts to build peace are less likely to succeed if women do not play their rightful role. Nearly five years after the adoption of that resolution, women are still scarce around negotiating tables, in constitution-making bodies and in political councils.

As we continue this debate, we need to recognize that, despite the comparative advantages of the United Nations in peacebuilding, there are limitations as to what the Organization can achieve. Success and progress must be judged against a realistic standard.

The President: The next speaker on my list is the representative of Ghana, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Tachie-Menson (Ghana): Mr. President, I would like to commend you at the outset for having convened this meeting, which offers the Council an invaluable opportunity to undertake an assessment of the agenda item under consideration, and for your effective steering of the affairs of the Council this month.

The Security Council, in conformity with its Charter mandate, has considered and authorized United Nations peacekeeping operations. That responsibility has been discharged commendably, given the United Nations success story in such operations. Despite the accomplishments registered, there is no doubt that the peacekeeping story has not been wholly glorious — a manifestation of the fact that this organ has on certain occasions failed to carry out its responsibilities effectively.

It is in this regard that my delegation welcomed the reports of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change and the report of the Secretary-General and their identification of the fact that there is a fundamental institutional gap within the United Nations system with respect to forestalling a State in crisis from plunging into war or to assisting it in ensuring that the transition is made from war to peace.

My delegation also concurs, in principle, with the Panel and with the Secretary-General's recommendation that a Peacebuilding Commission be established to effectively address that gap. It is heart-warming to recognize that the proposal enjoys widespread support among Member States. That positive reaction is a clear testimony of Member States' recognition of the need to address the shortfalls in United Nations peacekeeping operations, particularly during the post-conflict period.

Peacebuilding has in recent years emerged as an increasingly indispensable aspect of the various elements that constitute international peace operations. It is now widely acknowledged that, to achieve genuine closure of violent conflict situations, concerted efforts need to be made to put in place structures that would effectively dissipate lingering tensions. In this connection, it has been rightly observed that there is a need to ensure, right from the outset of peace initiatives, effective coordination, coherence and continuity among the various elements of the overall strategy of such operations — in particular between peacekeeping operations on the one hand and possible transitions into peacebuilding operations on the other.

Since attempts to secure a lasting peace in the aftermath of most violent conflicts around the globe necessarily requires sustained support from the United Nations and its development and humanitarian partners, efforts should be enhanced to encourage closer cooperation among all relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, regional and subregional organizations and the private sector to achieve the desired objectives.

In our opinion, the idea of the creation of an authoritative intergovernmental mechanism capable of establishing a substantive link between security and development and of ensuring the development of an integrated mission plan, with adequate coordination among the .various intergovernmental and national donor agencies, warrants universal support, as it would buttress efforts towards optimizing synergies for recovery and reconstruction.

The intricate link between development and security has been generally acknowledged. In that connection, given the development and security components of all post-conflict peacebuilding efforts, we cannot but concur with the proposal to place the Peacebuilding Commission under the joint authority of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council but to establish it by the authority of the General Assembly. For us, whatever decision is taken on the location of such a body should take into account all of the development and security elements, as well as the need for inclusiveness, maximum participation, genuine partnership and a balanced assessment of the security and humanitarian dimensions of post-conflict situations. In that connection, we support the Secretary-General's view that the mandate of the proposed Commission should be mainly focused on post-conflict peacebuilding. Also, for the Commission to achieve general acceptance, it should be of an advisory nature and not have decision-making powers.

Furthermore, my delegation endorses the Secretary-General's proposal that, in the event of the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Commission should report to the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council sequentially, and not jointly, to avoid duplication and confusion.

In terms of the Commission's composition, my delegation would prefer equal regional representation from the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. In addition, officials from the relevant United Nations departments, agencies, funds and programmes, as well as representatives of national authorities and regional or subregional organizations could be invited to participate in its meetings and activities. Given the developmental role of the Commission, the involvement of regional and international financial institutions is also an imperative.

In fairness, we would like to note that the acknowledged gap between relief and development has been to a degree narrowed down, albeit modestly, by the recent inclusion of funds for disarmament and demobilization as part of the assessed budget. That notwithstanding, serious gaps continue to impede efforts aimed at the reintegration of ex-combatants and displaced persons, the training and deployment of indigenous police forces, judicial reform, and other essential elements of peacebuilding.

Thus, in view of the fact that it usually takes some time before resources can be mobilized for demobilization, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) programmes at the end of a conflict, the proposed institution of a peacebuilding fund could play a crucial role in post-conflict peacebuilding and assist in the implementation of DDR programmes.

My delegation would further like to recognize the gender perspective in peacebuilding. The vital contribution of women in promoting peace, and their role in peacebuilding processes in particular, should not be overlooked. We wish to encourage all relevant initiatives geared towards the full participation of women in all stages of peace operations as part of the requisite gender mainstreaming. This would ensure that all policies and programmes adopted in peacebuilding would promote the full interests and participation of women, gender equality and respect for women's human rights.

I would like to recall that our experiences in West Africa reveal that certain sister States such as Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau could have benefited from the existence of an effective institutionalized peacebuilding mechanism. We share the Council's belief, stated in its presidential statement (S/PRST/2005/9) of 25 February 2005 in connection with its consideration of the agenda item entitled "Cross-border issues in West Africa", that action on cross-border and subregional issues should take place as part of a wider strategy of conflict prevention, crisis management and peacebuilding in the subregion. We add our voice to that of the Council in calling for the further promotion of an integrated approach in that regard with the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union, as well as other key international partners and civil society organizations. The establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission is, therefore, of paramount importance to Africa. Ghana's strong support of the proposed Commission was reflected in its decision to jointly host, with the Danish Government, a recent meeting in Accra to deliberate on the concept.

We cannot overemphasize the need for concerted international action to strengthen the enfeebled capacity of Governments and ensuring security sector reforms aimed at improving civil-military relations in countries emerging from conflict situations, with a view to creating a culture of peace and stability and promoting the rule of law. In this regard, another issue which merits serious consideration by the proposed Peacebuilding Commission is the need for the expeditious granting of assistance for reconstruction processes to meet the immediate requirements of deprived populations. A major inhibiting factor over the years has been the lack of early access to substantial development aid, with its attendant adverse effect on long-term reconstruction and development. Such situations invariably undermine the objective of promoting sustainable security.

Against that backdrop of an imperative need for concrete peacebuilding measures in contemporary peace operations so as to mitigate costly relapses into cycles of conflict, my delegation associates itself with the emerging consensus within this Organization to effectively and coherently put in place an institutional remedy to assist in ensuring a seamless transition from war to lasting peace. The ultimate goal should be to move beyond the simple extension of temporary relief to traumatized populations to meeting their expectation of an enabling environment for the attainment of sustainable peace.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Chile, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Muñoz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank the Danish presidency for having chosen the subject of post-conflict peacebuilding for the Council's thematic debate this month.

The international community has taken note of the enormous growth in United Nations peace operations over the past two decades. In the case of every such operation, once hostilities ceased, the United Nations set in motion an operation that was as just difficult, if not more so: post-conflict peacebuilding. This is an enormously complex challenge that is necessary because of the trauma inflicted on societies as a result of the often protracted armed conflicts that have torn them apart.

Peacebuilding demands, first of all, that we take a multidimensional approach to the search for a solution to the causes of conflict, generating minimum security conditions while making it possible to restore law and order and to lay the foundations for political, social and economic rehabilitation.

That is why we believe it essential that peace missions should have a comprehensive, multidimensional, long-term mandate that provides them with the tools and resources they need to assist transitional Governments in the task of institutional and economic reconstruction of States emerging from conflict. In the context of that holistic view of a peacebuilding mission, it is of fundamental importance that we seek inclusive political processes, involving all sectors of society that are prepared to renounce violence, so as to achieve a social contract that makes it possible to generate a sustainable climate of peace and security. To that end, it is essential to ensure the creation of a wide-ranging national dialogue that brings together all the relevant political forces.

Often, the root causes of conflict are poverty, hunger and underdevelopment. Thus, security and development are essential components that are mutually reinforcing. Once a conflict is over, it is vital that the international community, while helping to create political stability and a safe environment, provide a level of resources that makes it possible to tackle the most urgent needs of the population and help transitional Governments to prepare quick-impact strategies and develop medium- and long-term development programmes and projects. We believe that the Economic and Social Council, through its ad hoc advisory groups, can make a substantial long-term contribution to that effort.

The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) provides a clear example of such a situation. The United Nations operation in Haiti is clearly a fourth-generation peace mission, whose goal is not merely the suppression of violence. Its task is a complex one, ranging from creating or strengthening democratic institutions and ensuring full respect for human rights to the modernization of legislation, the consolidation of political parties, the reform of the judicial and penal systems and, last but not least, the restructuring and professionalization of the national police. Such situations can be found elsewhere, too.

Although I do not intend to speak at length on the Secretary-General's recommendations in the context of the United Nations reform process, we must point to the desirability of creating a Peacebuilding Commission designed to help countries go beyond the transitional phase between armed conflict and the restoration of national institutions and to help them overcome the trauma of conflict. In addition, the initiative to create within the Secretariat a Rule of Law Assistance Unit to cooperate with national initiatives to restore the rule of law in societies that have been or are still in conflict is a very positive one that will make it possible to enhance our approach to issues of the rule of law and reconciliation in the post-conflict phase.

We also believe that involving local people in the elaboration and implementation of post-conflict strategies at an early stage is decisive in making such strategies more acceptable, viable and sustainable. That not only achieves the vital goal of involving the beneficiaries themselves in the process, but also optimizes its implementation, since this depends on local experience and knowledge.

We also believe that we must keep in mind the regional context of a conflict. Thus, from its inception, a mission must factor regional synergies into the peacebuilding process. In this context, we should bear in mind the increasingly important complementary contribution that various regional organizations can make in ensuring stable solutions.

Along with those elements, it is essential to be able to rely on sufficient financial and human resources to carry out the peace missions mandated by the Security Council. Those resources are all the more necessary in the first phases of a mission, when there is especially urgent need among the population. That initial encounter will determine the level of trust between the members of the peace mission and the population as regards the task ahead. Once the emergency phase is over, it is sometimes difficult to rely on the resources pledged by the international community to implement ongoing projects; such a situation can ultimately undermine the timely and successful outcome of those projects.

It is precisely because we are convinced about the tremendous importance of post-conflict peacebuilding missions that we believe that we must continue to do all we can to improve them, starting with the planning, deployment and execution phases. Each success helps lay the foundations for the political, economic and social development of peoples, for the establishment of the rule of law and for respect for human rights; this paves the road for long-desired peace and stability in countries and regions previously torn by violence.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Slovakia.

Mr. Burian (Slovakia): Slovakia fully associates itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union. My delegation wishes to add several observations and comments in its national capacity.

My country has been playing an active role in peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts in various parts of the world for many years, and has thus assumed its share of responsibility for the strengthening and protection of values and principles that the United Nations stands for.

Ample experience in peacekeeping has provided us with a whole new dimension of understanding of the depth and complexity of the challenges and threats to global peace and security. Slovakia stands ready to share all the expertise and experience it has gained with its partners, States Members of the United Nations.

Not a great deal of time has passed since Europe, especially its eastern part, underwent major political changes connected, at least in some cases, with difficult security challenges. Although not all the problematic issues have yet been entirely overcome, the final outcomes, luckily, have been mostly positive. That has been so. Thanks in large part to the positive role played by regional formations and regional organizations. In addition to the European Union and NATO, I have in mind the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and its active role in a wide range of areas, such as free elections, the building of democratic institutions, the reform of public administration, et cetera. We argue for the further widening and strengthening of United Nations cooperation with regional organizations such as the European Union, NATO, the OSCE and the Council of Europe in the area of building stability and peace. Their ample expertise, experience and proven and established best practices could be of great benefit wherever necessary.

Also, I would like to particularly emphasize the role of civil society and non-governmental organizations in post-conflict peacebuilding. As our own experience has well proven, they are the ones who can ensure greater ownership and capacity-building at the local level, and who can make a great contribution to the implementation of strategies and to the proper delivery of tasks.

In that regard, Slovakia has in recent years been particularly active in the western Balkans. We have had wide experience in providing good offices to the countries of the western Balkans. Just this past weekend, Bratislava hosted another international conference on development in the western Balkans. In his speech at the conference, His Excellency Mr. Eduard Kukan, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic and former Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Balkans, said, "The future of the western Balkans region lies, above all else, in deepening collaboration and building trust".

In that respect, we think it appropriate to point out another positive role played by a regional formation — the Visegrad Four, comprising the Czech

Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. Throughout the 1990s and in the first years of this century, especially during the processes of the accession of its four members into the European and transatlantic structures, and to the present day, the Visegrad Four has been tremendously helpful in enhancing political dialogue and the atmosphere of mutual trust, cooperation and good-neighbourly relations. That has been the case in spite of the Visegrad Four being only an informal formation, with no institutional framework necessary. As our experience shows, the development of this kind of regional cooperation can be an important factor in peacebuilding and in strengthening regional stability.

We have learned this lesson ourselves; that is why we have been advising our friends, especially those from the western Balkans, that areas such as the intensification of political dialogue in the broadest sense of the word, the development of economic cooperation, exchanges of students and teachers and cultural cooperation are the motive forces for further democratic change in individual countries.

Still speaking of the western Balkans, we see the greatest dangers to the building of a democratic society in the region, including that of slipping back into conflict, above all in the underdeveloped state of civil society, the lack of development of the rule of law and the difficult economic situation. The latter provides fertile ground for corruption, extremism and organized crime. Stability is an important prerequisite for the building of a democratic society. Tomorrow the Security Council will hold an open debate on the situation in Kosovo. We believe that many of those factors need to be taken into account in the peaceful resolution of Kosovo's future status, too. Slovakia stands ready to continue playing an active and instructive role in this important process in whatever way necessary.

As an added value, my country could now, among other things, offer its experts and their recent professional experience gained from the successful reform of our armed and security forces and the rapid re-establishment of the fundamental principles of the rule of law. Also, we have recently invested a great deal of financial resources and energy in enabling our armed and security forces to better address areas such as organized crime, the vulnerability of the information and communication systems and the role of non-State actors in possible acts of terrorism and in the threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We regard the concept of the armed forces being an integral part of democratic institutions and processes and falling under proper civilian and parliamentary control as a significant element of sustainable peacebuilding efforts.

We are also making every effort to be able to contribute further civilian and police capacities. We are hopeful that such personnel will be able to live up to the very positive reputation, earned in recent years, especially by our military engineers, deminers and paramedics. We are currently closely looking at ways and means to widen or enhance our offer of expert and training capacities — governmental as well as non-governmental — in fields such as accountable and transparent disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes, reform of public administration, free elections, good governance, building of democratic institutions, economic and social reform, and so forth. We would welcome the creation of a United Nations standing list of such institutional and personnel capacities to be used whenever and wherever there is a need. Slovakia is ready to contribute appropriately to such a list.

Substantial and lasting progress in the overall peace and security situation of any conflict can hardly be achieved without tangible improvement of the economic and social situation of ordinary people and without their feeling the benefits of the rule of law. By adopting effective measures in those areas, Slovakia has gradually moved from being a recipient of development assistance in the early 1990s into the present situation of being an emerging donor country now providing official development assistance to 14 partner countries in Europe, Asia and Africa. We have been supporting those countries' institutional capacities, infrastructure and living conditions and sharing our own experience from the ongoing transformation of our economic and social system. That is undoubtedly an indispensable part of the entire concept of peacebuilding.

As we have done on previous occasions, we wish to express our strong support for the creation of a Peacebuilding Commission and for its four main purposes as proposed by the Secretary-General. We see that step as a prerequisite for abolishing the existing institutional gap. The urgent need to maintain peace and security in post-conflict situations and achieve long-term sustainable social and economic development must be addressed appropriately.

In conclusion, let me thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this open debate and for presenting us with an excellent discussion paper (S/2005/316, annex). We would welcome it if this kind of valuable discussion were to continue and if it were to be followed up by further concrete, practical steps. In that connection, we think it would be worthwhile to consider, for instance, the organization of a United Nations conference on peacebuilding, transformation and stabilization to discuss best practices in the area of building peace and stability. I wish to assure the Council of my Government's keen support for all the peacebuilding efforts and endeavours of the United Nations. We are strongly committed to achieving the best possible results in all their aspects.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Sierra Leone, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Pemagbi (Sierra Leone): The delegation of Sierra Leone wishes to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May 2005. We extend to you and to the other members of the Council our deep appreciation for selecting for public debate a subject that is closer to our heart than we can express. The choice of post-conflict peacebuilding as the subject of this debate is an indication of the significance that your delegation and the Council attach to that critical aspect of the peace process. We view this debate as a prelude to an opportunity for more exhaustive discussion of the Secretary-General's proposed Peacebuilding Commission.

As all are aware, Sierra Leone is a post-conflict country. Naturally, we are delighted to participate in this debate, and we are doing so from the perspective of our practical experience and our expectations.

The post-conflict phase of a peace process is supposed to address the issues that generated the conflict and to lay the foundation for lasting peace and development. It is a period for reconciliation, confidence-building and the rebuilding of institutions, especially those for the administration of justice, democracy, human rights and accountable governance. It is a period for a country in war-to-peace transition to reflect on the past and to cultivate attitudes that will facilitate the avoidance of the mistakes that culminated in the conflict.

But it is also a phase that is characterized by expectations for a better standard of living, justice, human rights, freedom, rapid development, social services and, of course, participatory governance. After all, it is the lack of access to these that generates most conflicts in the world today. The fear and anxiety of post-conflict countries stem from a failure to deliver on those expectations, and, often, many post-conflict countries have neither the resources nor the capacity to deliver on them.

Unfortunately, moreover, post-conflict peace management or consolidation has never been a priority of the international community. Making sure that the guns are silent, but not making sure that they are silent forever, has been erroneously interpreted as peace. Hence the bitter experience of frequent reverses in peace efforts.

The problem of abandoning post-conflict countries to struggle with their own fate has been aptly described by the Secretary-General as "a gaping hole in the United Nations institutional machinery" (*A/59/2005, para. 114*). That is why Sierra Leone welcomes — and with great expectations — the Secretary-General's recommendation to create a Peacebuilding Commission charged with the responsibility of promoting assistance for post-conflict countries to transit from war to lasting peace. Naturally, we look forward to the establishment and operationalization of the Commission, particularly in the light of the withdrawal from my country of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL).

It is common knowledge that the United Nations has scored major successes in Sierra Leone and that UNAMSIL is on the verge of completing its withdrawal. We appreciate the role of the United Nations organs and agencies in our post-conflict recovery, but we wish that no "gaping hole" existed and that the United Nations were more involved in this phase. In spite of that, and in spite of many difficulties, Sierra Leone is proud of its rapid progress in many areas, including rebuilding the justice system and strengthening the rule of law; raising new, better, trained, disciplined and efficient security forces; restoring social services; rehabilitating the road infrastructure; capacity-building; governance reforms; reviving the economy; reintegrating ex-combatants; and resettling the displaced population. We owe those developments to the generosity of the international community and our bilateral friends. We thank them all. But we need more — much more — to sustain the momentum for achieving lasting peace and stability. That is the most reliable guarantee against sliding back into conflict.

In conclusion, it is fair to say that the United Nations is at a crossroads, poised for fundamental reform in response to identified weaknesses and strengths and to challenges imposed by its ever expanding functions. One of those challenges is armed conflict in all its aspects and manifestations. Now we have the unprecedented opportunity to take decisions on reforms and on the creation of new institutions for the elimination of armed conflict and, more urgently, for helping countries emerging from conflict to achieve lasting peace and stability. It is much better and much cheaper to invest in post-conflict peacebuilding, which is also preventive in nature, than to expend scarce resources on relapses that can be prevented.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Côte d'Ivoire, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Djangoné-Bi (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): I wish at the outset, on behalf of my delegation, to congratulate you sincerely, Sir, on Denmark's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May. You are presiding over the work of the Council at a time when the United Nations is discussing the great challenges facing the world: collective security, development and respect for human rights. I can assure you that my delegation supports all your initiatives. I wish also to thank you for having organized this debate on a topical theme, to which my country, Côte d'Ivoire — which has been at war since 19 September 2002 — attaches great importance.

Further, I salute the Secretary-General's determination constantly to reassert the role of the Organization in peacebuilding and the maintenance of peace in the post-conflict phase.

All the steps the Council has already taken in the sphere of post-conflict peacebuilding in countries emerging from conflict have proven to be extremely effective. These relate to restoring the rule of law and confidence in the impartiality of the judicial, security and penal systems; to arms embargoes; to the process of certifying the origin of natural resources in countries being assisted; to subregional efforts to monitor the movements of ex-combatants and the trafficking in women and children. Such measures have been useful for the long-term maintenance of peace wherever they have been implemented.

The same applies to the commitment to quick-impact projects during peacekeeping and the linking of crisis resolution and peacebuilding measures.

The emphasis must now be on enhancing overall coherence and constantly making sure that the stakeholders' work is consistent and that there is complementarity, as well as close cooperation among all national and international actors.

Any peacekeeping programme needs to include a priority component of arms control. The proliferation of small arms and their uncontrolled circulation is without any doubt an important fact or that complicates and prolongs conflicts, particularly in Africa. The resurgence of rebel movements and the rise in organized crime in our countries have been made possible because of the proliferation of and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, and the eradication of these weapons requires the support of the international community.

Given the multitude of conflicts and their complexity, it is more necessary than ever before that States combine their efforts to deal with this phenomenon. Success will not be assured or lasting unless the embargo on importing weapons is strengthened by identifying, on the one hand, the licit and illicit supply lines of weapons and resources that fuel conflicts, and, on the other, all national and external interests in the conflict.

We all recall the recommendations on the threat of conflict between States and the threat of conflict within States, as contained in the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change; in recent months those recommendations were the subject of broad-based consultation and discussion. There is no doubt that the strategy to be formulated at the September summit which we all eagerly await will make it possible to strengthen the consensus that should guide our action. Pending those conclusions, we must continue to think about various ways to give new momentum to the work of the United Nations in the areas of peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

Côte d'Ivoire, exhausted and shaken by war, has clearly embarked resolutely on restoring domestic peace. This fortunate process, which we owe to the mediation of the African Union, led by President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, would benefit if it were assisted and strengthened by measures that are being discussed in the Security Council right now. Côte d'Ivoire is counting on the international community to support us in our difficult post-conflict reconstruction. Unless there is major investment in post-disarmament, demobilization and reintegration — unless there is bold action to help out development — it is obvious that there is a risk of relapsing into crisis. It is by making these investments that peace may be built on a lasting basis.

Clearly, peacekeeping operations, although very useful, are not enough in themselves to guarantee a return to peace and future peacebuilding. These operations have to go hand in hand with development activities, which should be tailored by the specialized agencies and the United Nations programmes to support the efforts of the authorities of the country concerned.

It is with this in mind that my delegation supports the welcome proposal of the Secretary-General to establish a Peacebuilding Commission.

I cannot conclude my statement without reaffirming the fervent desire of Côte d'Ivoire to continue to receive assistance from the United Nations in organizing and holding the upcoming general elections, particularly the presidential election to be held in October of this year. I should also like to convey once again to the United Nations and, in particular, to the Security Council the gratitude of my country for steps already taken and those being envisaged with perfect complementarity of action by the various stakeholders in resolving the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire to guarantee that these elections will be free and transparent.

Furthermore, I would be grateful to you, Mr. President, if you could relay the message of Côte d'Ivoire to countries that contribute troops and other resources to bring about a return of peace to my country.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Nigeria.

Mr. Adekanye (Nigeria): I wish to thank the presidency for organizing this open debate on the subject of post-conflict peacebuilding and the opportunity for the Nigerian delegation to participate therein. This is most timely, considering the attention that the subject has received in recent discussions among member States on how best our Organization can address the challenges that flow from conflict situations once the United Nations peacekeeping missions have fulfilled their mandates in the specific countries concerned.

It is not my intention to re-state the Secretary-General's well-grounded concerns on this subject, which have led to his recommendation for the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission for the Organization. Suffice it to say that, through its long involvement in United Nations peacekeeping operations, Nigeria, as an important troop-contributing country, has come to the conclusion that post-conflict peacebuilding constitutes an integral, though not fully addressed, phase of peace management efforts of the international community. Statistics of relapse abound in countries emerging from conflict. The potential of such relapses has grown in the proportion that conflicts have multiplied. It has brought to the fore commitment to peace agreements by parties to the conflicts, a number of whom have found it convenient to take up their arms again to fight for causes that they believe could only be won on the battlefield. Such situations, if allowed to go unchecked, would set at naught the heroic efforts of our valiant United Nations peacekeepers. Besides the loss of vital and scarce resources, both for our Organization and the countries concerned, neighbouring countries have almost invariably been sucked into such renewed hostilities with far-reaching consequences for peace, security and stability in the subregion.

In Africa, which has a disproportionately large share of conflict situations in the world, the challenges of post-conflict peacebuilding are particularly daunting. The porous nature of our borders, the advances and ease in communication, and the mobility of populations have challenged traditional notions of conflict, in which attempts at resolution have focused on peace agreements between belligerents in the national territories. Considerable resources have also been devoted to immediate problems of disarmament and demobilization of erstwhile combatants.

However, it is evident that the reintegration or rehabilitation components of conflict resolution have to be given more attention than has hitherto been the case. It is our assessment that the efforts of the international community in this area perhaps hold the key to lasting peace. For populations, especially women and vulnerable groups brutalized by conflicts, an effective and well-funded reintegration and rehabilitation programme would constitute an assurance that conflicts are indeed over and that people can resume their normal lives. Current steps that have been taken to reintegrate ex-combatants in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process, for example, through the creation of job opportunities for the large population of restive youths, as part of strategies to wean them from conflicts, should be consolidated.

Nigeria believes that, for post-conflict peacebuilding to be effective, it must focus on some key groups and areas in conflict environments. The key groups would include professional soldiers who have fought on the side of non-State actors; rebel or mercenary soldiers; and child soldiers. Account must also be taken of vulnerable groups — namely, women and children. The key areas deserving the international community's attention in all peacebuilding efforts include the provision of employment opportunities, training of ex-combatants, in particular to give them skills enabling them to live normal lives, resuscitation and strengthening of the judicial system, protection and promotion of human rights, including measures to punish human rights offenders, and reconciliation and the healing process.

In all that, it is essential that we resist the temptation to apply one solution designed to fit all situations. Rather, our efforts should take full account of the specific local situation by ensuring national ownership. Close collaboration with local and national entities, including civil society groups, would also be invaluable. That would ensure that long after the peacekeepers depart, the process of rebuilding shattered societies and lives continues. Thus, the fruits of the investments in peace are reaped.

Nigeria believes that subregional and regional organizations should have a complementary role to play in post-conflict peacebuilding. Some of those organizations, including in particular the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union, have proved that they can be relied on as effective partners in both conflict resolution and the peacebuilding process. Thus, enhancing the capacity of those organizations would enable them to perform even better. In that regard, it is desirable for the Council to address the special needs of Africa.

Finally, one cannot overemphasize the need to mobilize the support of the international financial institutions to make a worthwhile investment in peace. That calls for a genuine partnership and understanding between the United Nations and those institutions.

In conclusion, I wish to state that it is the expectation of the Nigerian delegation that our debate today will enable the Council to devote greater attention to post-conflict peacebuilding and thereby reinforce the confidence of affected populations — and, indeed, the international community — in the Council's primary role of maintaining international peace and security.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Shin Kak-soo (Republic of Korea): At the outset, let me join previous speakers in thanking you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate on peacebuilding. Given the emerging consensus on the proposed establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission, the subject of today's debate is especially timely.

The cessation of armed conflict does not always instantly bring peace on the ground. Rather, it is only the first step in the long, hard peacebuilding process. Peacebuilding comprises all efforts to assist countries and regions in their transition from war to peace, encompassing a wide range of political, development, humanitarian and human rights programmes and mechanisms. In particular, peacebuilding is all the more important in the light of the fragile and vulnerable situation that exists following the restoration of peace, as almost 50 per cent of armed conflicts recur within five years of their cessation.

It is our firm conviction that conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding are so closely interlinked that it would be more effective to pursue them simultaneously rather than sequentially. Concerted efforts to build durable peace in countries and regions in a post-conflict situation are critical to establishing the conditions for sustainable long-term development and thus preventing the resurgence of conflict.

My Government is pleased to note that the Secretary-General's recommendation to create a Peacebuilding Commission has the broad support of the general membership of the United Nations. This innovative proposal would fill an institutional gap within the United Nations system, allowing the Organization to provide coordinated assistance to post-conflict societies, which must traverse the difficult and often treacherous path from violent conflict to sustainable peace and economic development.

Member States have discussed the major issues with respect to a Peacebuilding Commission at great length, including its mandate, reporting structure, composition and funding. Reaffirming our strong commitment to the creation of a Peacebuilding Commission, I would like to take this opportunity to focus on two outstanding issues: its reporting structure and composition.

Post-conflict peacebuilding will require close coordination and collaboration between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. Indeed, owing to the mixed nature of peacebuilding functions, it is difficult to make a clear delineation between the mandates of the two organs. Furthermore, peacebuilding efforts do not always unfold in a linear, step-by-step fashion; the simultaneous involvement of both the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council is thus required. Hence, it is imperative to ensure close coordination between those two principal organs throughout the whole process of peacebuilding.

Another important consideration is that the expertise of the Economic and Social Council in the social and economic arenas should be deployed at an early stage of the peacebuilding process in order to optimize the outcome of peacebuilding efforts in the long-term perspective. In its reporting, a Peacebuilding Commission should make recommendations, taking into account the medium- and long-term development needs of the countries in transition.

Regarding the composition of a Peacebuilding Commission, we have proposed one possible model, which includes two permanent and three non-permanent members of the Security Council and six members of the Economic and Social Council, ensuring an adequate balance between the two bodies. It is also crucial that a Peacebuilding Commission establish close links with two important stakeholders, the funds and programmes of the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions and regional development banks, by allowing for their representatives' participation as observers in its deliberations.

The Republic of Korea attaches great importance to peacebuilding as a vital instrument of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security. We note with satisfaction that peacebuilding has now become an ongoing mainstream activity integrated into the Secretariat's daily operations, with 10 peacebuilding missions currently in the field.

Let me conclude with the hope that with the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission at an early date, the United Nations will become more efficient and effective in its comprehensive efforts to promote peacebuilding.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Chaudhry (Pakistan): Let me join others in felicitating the Danish presidency on its excellent handling of the Council's work during this month. We also congratulate Ambassador Wang Guangya for the successful Chinese presidency in April.

We welcome this important debate on post-conflict peacebuilding and appreciate the personal participation of Foreign Minister Mr. Møller. The Presidency's discussion paper has been useful in guiding the debate. We also appreciate the contributions made by the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Fréchette, the President of the World Bank, Mr. Wolfensohn, and other speakers.

The subject of peacebuilding has received increasing attention since the High-level Panel's report (A/59/565) last December. The Secretary-General later offered his reflections in his report entitled "In larger freedom" (A/59/2005) and in a subsequent non-paper. The proposal for a Peacebuilding Commission is now under active consideration in the General Assembly. The proposal has particular relevance and appeal for countries emerging from conflict, especially in Africa.

I would like to make a few points. First, the increased focus on peacebuilding during the last couple of years has its roots in the now well-recognized interlinkage between peace and development. Indeed, sustainable peace can be built only on a foundation of sustainable development.

Secondly, peacebuilding is complex. It embraces many facets, including the security, political, economic, social and humanitarian facets. It often involves assistance for institutional capacity-building, economic recovery, good governance, reconciliation, rule of law, human rights and the organization of elections, among other things. It is clear that no single United Nations organ has an exclusive mandate over those issues. Successful peacebuilding strategies have to be based on a comprehensive and integrated approach, greater systemwide coherence, increased inter-organ coordination and the engagement of all relevant actors.

Thirdly, though peacebuilding is associated mainly with post-conflict situations, in which one of the main concerns is to help prevent a relapse into conflict, it is equally important to prevent conflicts in the first place. Apart from preventive diplomacy and the pacific settlement of disputes, development should be promoted as the best means to prevent conflict. Assistance in economic, humanitarian or other fields may be provided at the request of a country to avoid slipping towards conflict.

Fourthly, at the policy level, a primary challenge is to recognize and respect the respective competencies of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council with regard to peacebuilding. Besides, the integration of peacebuilding activities in the field and at the country level logically necessitates coordination between the relevant organs and other actors at Headquarters. We believe that complementarity in the work of the three principal organs should be used to promote synergy in peacebuilding efforts. Interaction between the Security Council and the ad hoc advisory groups of the Economic and Social Council on countries emerging from conflict is a good basis upon which to build. Another challenge is to preserve and promote national ownership of the peacebuilding programmes and activities and to ensure that the priorities of the country concerned have precedence.

Fifthly, it is widely acknowledged that we need an institutional mechanism dedicated to peacebuilding. It may not be merely a gap-filling mechanism, but should promote and coordinate a comprehensive approach. It should be an intergovernmental body with the flexibility to bring together all relevant actors in specific situations, including United Nations agencies and the international financial institutions, as appropriate.

Sixthly, experience from various specific situations, Guinea-Bissau for example, shows that the major challenge remains the provision of adequate, timely and sustained assistance for peacebuilding activities. The special circumstances of countries emerging from conflict should be kept in mind while recommending policy changes and negotiating aid packages. The international financial institutions should show some operational flexibility. Debt write-offs should be considered in the first instance. While the recipient countries are expected to meet some minimum requirements, there should be no shifting of the goalposts by the donors. The proposal for a standing fund for peacebuilding has merit.

All of us are trying to find answers to many of those and other questions in the Secretary-General's proposal for the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission. We hope that the various ideas advanced today by Member States will feed into the rich array of proposals already made on peacebuilding in general, and the Peacebuilding Commission in particular.

I should like to recall that, in 2003, Pakistan first proposed the idea of ad hoc composite committees, comprised of members drawn from the three principal organs of the United Nations, to effectively address complex crises in all their phases, including post-conflict peacebuilding. In May 2004, during Pakistan's presidency of the Security Council, we circulated a non-paper on ad hoc composite committees during a public meeting on complex crises and the United Nations response.

During the discussions in the General Assembly, Pakistan has circulated its specific proposal on the proposed Peacebuilding Commission. Pakistan has a special interest and a sense of ownership in the proposed Commission, which basically follows the same concept of a composite approach we proposed long ago. We are working with other Member States to further crystallize the proposal and we are hopeful that the General Assembly will be in a position to establish the Commission at its forthcoming session.

The President: I call on the representative of Indonesia.

Ms. Asmady (Indonesia): Allow me at the outset to thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Mr. Per Stig Møller, for his initiative of convening this debate on the subject of post-conflict peacebuilding. I commend the very helpful non-paper distributed by the Danish Permanent Mission on that important issue. I would also like to acknowledge the presence among us of Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette and of Mr. James Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank.

One cannot justifiably participate in a debate of this nature without taking at least a quick look at what the Security Council, as the body responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, has done so far. In the wake of the demand for peacekeeping in the recent past, as well as the tendency of some cultures to slip back into conflict soon after a peacekeeping mission or the cessation of hostilities, peacebuilding has become an increasingly important burden for the Council and for the United Nations in general.

As we all now know, one of the most talked-about proposals in the Organization in recent times, originating from the Secretary-General's report "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all", is that of establishing a Peacebuilding Commission. Not surprisingly, the proposal has received wide support throughout the United Nations. It is the belief of the delegation of Indonesia that discussions such as this not only underline the importance of peacebuilding, but will strengthen the international effort to mobilize the ideas and structures that will be needed to implement it.

It is obvious that, as difficult as peacekeeping is, it does not hold the subtleties and challenges that peacebuilding entails. We cannot mandate peacebuilding in the same sense as the Council might mandate a peacekeeping mission, or impose regulations of peace in the same sense as we might rules of engagement. Peacebuilding is a political exigency that must be fine-tuned and implemented as an art. Just as the practice of peacekeeping emerged with complex multidimensional mandates, peacebuilding can succeed only if it proceeds from a multidimensional and comprehensive perspective. In our view, therefore, the first and most important factor for such success is serious institutional planning.

While there will always be variations in local cultures and environments that must be taken into consideration in particular mandates, peacebuilding has one luxury that peacekeeping does not. That factor is time. Since peacebuilding would usually follow a period of peacekeeping, it should benefit from the time lag that the cessation of hostilities or a peacekeeping mission provides. This means that, for that particular country or environment, peacebuilding preparation, at its most multidimensional and comprehensive best, ought to commence once peacekeeping is under way.

It is not debatable that, if peacebuilding is to succeed, there must be a deep sense of ownership and capacity among local actors. Indeed, no matter what else is attempted or provided, it is only the investment of local participation, ideas and energy that can imbue a peacebuilding effort not only with legitimacy, but with "building" tools as well. Programme planners must determine from the beginning what means might best be used to ensure such local ownership, and advantage must be taken of available time to advance a clear, realistic and inclusive peacebuilding strategy.

With reference to the issue of content, therefore, my delegation is of the view that peacebuilding should be structured as part of a broader development agenda. In the best-case scheme, that agenda would include the provision of such elements as physical infrastructure and education that would continue from where such peacekeeping programmes as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration may have left off. A well-grounded approach of that nature, tied into the expectations of peace and stability, would convey the important message that the international community is determined to see that the peacebuilding process is an investment in the future.

In the view of my delegation, a significant component of that broader agenda is the rule of law. It is of the utmost importance that provision be made for the structures of a viable legal and judicial order and the protection of human rights. Those structures are crucial towards ensuring that all social, political and economic processes are governed by the rule of law. It is obvious that a scenario such as that involves timely, sustained and well-targeted resources. We share the view that, while high levels of aid do not guarantee success, the absence or inadequacy of aid would make post-conflict peacebuilding efforts a time-wasting charade.

Similarly, it is increasingly recognized that focusing narrowly on country-level peacebuilding efforts is unlikely to yield significant changes in peacebuilding outcomes, especially in the regions where conflict has interlocking political, security and economic dynamics. Planning for peacebuilding must be cognizant of such situations — as we have seen in West Africa and the Democratic Republic of the Congo — and broader strategies must be prepared in order to respond to them.

In that connection, let me point out that there is growing evidence that the failure to address international trade in conflict goods helps to sustain criminal economic networks in post-conflict environments, thereby significantly reducing the impact of in-country peacebuilding strategies. The steady global trade in small arms and light weapons, for instance, compounds the difficulties of country-based disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) strategies. A peacebuilding strategy that does not take those interlocking factors into account would obviously be a tremendous waste of resources.

As I have indicated, my delegation is very much in favour of adequate and advanced planning for peacebuilding, but this must apply not only to funding and material, but also to the deployment of the required civilian personnel. To this end, my delegation would like to see a pool of such trained personnel made available and a comprehensive database of peacebuilding experts maintained by the Secretariat.

Finally, let me reiterate my hope that this welcome debate will enrich peacebuilding thinking at the United Nations in general, and in the Peacebuilding Commission in particular.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Peru.

Mr. De Rivero (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is very significant that the Security Council should dedicate this open meeting to the topic of peacebuilding. We appreciate the initiative of the Danish delegation in that respect.

It is very important for my delegation that the efforts and resources of the international community also be mobilized on a preventive basis to help States that are undergoing stress — in other words, countries that run the risk of imploding into civil war and turning into chaotic, ungovernable entities that are showcases for massive violations of human rights, ethnic cleansing and even genocide. By failing, at the international level, to provide intensive preventive care to many States undergoing stress, in the post-cold-war era we ended up producing more than 30 civil conflicts that resulted in more than 5 million deaths and 17 million refugees.

Recent experience has shown that death, destruction, chaos and the plague of hatred left by those conflicts make the task of reconciliation and reconstruction of those States more complex. Many of those so affected have been abandoned to their fate and remain in a collapsed and ungovernable state. Many of the tools used today for peacebuilding in collapsed States are the same tools that could have been used to prevent conflict. But what is different is the cost in human lives and the destruction of property. For that reason, peacebuilding strategies must also include conflict prevention. That is the inescapable responsibility of the United Nations.

Having spoken about prevention, now I will address today's topic of post-conflict peacebuilding.

One of the main goals of the peacebuilding process in post-conflict situations is to develop a viable economy. What does a viable economy signify? It means that reconstruction should not replicate the dysfunctional economy that had caused the State to fail. In other words, we should not rebuild a primary economy that is based on a single crop or that exports low-tech products that do not generate sufficient resources for collapsed States with growing urban populations.

The building of a new economy that is viable in the global economy implies, first, the provision of financial and economic intensive care for the collapsed State. That means emergency measures designed to write off a sizeable proportion of the debt, provide new credits, massively increase assistance to meet the most urgent social needs and, in particular, to increase access to food, water and energy. Once intensive initial care has been provided, structural measures will be required to modernize and diversify the technological component of exports, in order to release those countries from the trap of primary production that cannot compete in today's global economy.

That could be achieved with the help of entrepreneurs and executives from the private sector, members of the Global Compact created by the Secretary-General. Those executives have global experience in trade in transnational goods and services. They could thus play a more creative and more realistic part in modernizing non-viable economies than could many technocrats in the international financial institutions.

To create businesses that can produce competitive goods and services in collapsed States, instead of economists from the financial bureaucracies, we need entrepreneurs with transnational experience, members of the Global Compact. What we must not do is rebuild a non-viable primary economy that is incapable of producing enough resources in the context of a global economy that increasingly demands goods and services with a high degree of technological advancement.

Entrepreneurs and transnational businesses participating in reconstruction policies should continue to honour the Ten Principles they accepted in the Global Compact, including respect for human rights, decent working conditions, protection of the environment and anti-corruption efforts.

The need to not recreate the backward, non-viable primary economy and to create a new competitive economy should also guide the institutions of the international financial system, which up to the present have focused more on economic adjustment than on modernizing economies that are dysfunctional within today's competitive global economy.

We have to understand that today's conflicts are the product of non-competitive, dysfunctional economies marginalized by globalization, leading to tremendous social exclusion and environmental degradation, to the extent that the entire national market system becomes non-functional and leads to the collapse of the State. Many ethnic, religious and cultural conflicts have been aggravated by the social marginalization produced by non-viable economies, sometimes reaching levels of violence that lead to genocide, ethnic cleansing and other crimes against humanity.

It is not by chance that most of the civil conflicts being addressed nowadays by the Security Council are occurring in countries where primary production has not increased sufficiently, where there has been explosive growth in the urban population, and where personal income has grown no more than 2 per cent in the last 28 years. Such countries, victims of the perverse interplay between population growth and primary production, have been marginalized in terms of investment flows, trade and technological research. They have had to go further and further into debt to purchase the technology that they cannot produce on their own, to the extent that they can no longer honour their debts. In order to continue to obtain credit, they have to undergo structural adjustment, which, instead of modernizing them, only makes them more unstable politically.

While modernizing the non-viable economies of collapsed States, we must also set in motion a process of political reconstruction. In other words, while building a viable economy, we also have to create an effective institutional democracy.

In building such democratic institutions, the commitment of the international community is required. That is why Peru has consistently advocated that all Security Council peacekeeping missions incorporate institutional reconstruction programmes that will lay the foundation for a solid democracy.

The first thing to be done is to promote national agreement — in other words, arrive at an effective social contract within the collapsed country. That social contract has to be secured by United Nations peacekeeping forces, which must ensure that power is gradually transferred to the people through national democratic institutions.

Reconstruction should also lead to a revitalized national civil administration capable of providing basic public services such as water, energy, health care, education and infrastructure. It is also crucial that such a civil administration be created on the basis of democratic principles that will strengthen the rule of law.

What is most important, however, is for such a democratic civil reconstruction to start at the local level. First priority has to be accorded to setting up local democratic governments. Democracy must spread from the local level to the regional level, and from the regional level to the State. Thus democracy spreads from the citizenry to the State.

These thoughts on the democratic reconstruction of collapsed States are based on important socio-political studies that have been carried out with respect to specific cases, in particular Kosovo, Timor-Leste, Liberia and Sierra Leone. I am thinking in particular of the research done by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, which now has observer status with the General Assembly.

Up to now, the greatest constraints on peacebuilding have been a lack of strategies aimed at preventing conflict, and then, in the post-conflict stage, a lack of strategies aimed at creating a modern, viable economy and at building democracy, starting from small local communities and working up to the national level.

Post-conflict peacebuilding must evolve into an economic and political process that simultaneously creates viable economies and democratic institutions.

Such a process must be innovative and be led by the United Nations, with the participation of, and fresh input by, Global Compact transnational companies as well as institutions and civil society.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Papua New Guinea in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Aisi (Papua New Guinea) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Papua New Guinea, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Aisi (Papua New Guinea): I wish to thank you, Madam President, for allowing me to speak at the last minute. But as all the discussions have been about peacebuilding, I would like to tell the Council a little bit about what is happening in my country in terms of the process that is taking place.

First, however, allow me, Madam President, to take this opportunity to extend the appreciation of my delegation for the convening of this meeting in connection with the subject of post-conflict peacebuilding. Papua New Guinea is one of the countries that has experienced post-conflict peacebuilding on the island of Bougainville, in Papua New Guinea, for more than a decade now.

My delegation is pleased to report on the progress in the peace process in Bougainville.

The island had been wrecked by a bloody civil conflict. It is believed that about 20,000 people died in the turmoil, while thousands more were injured. However, major steps were taken towards a peaceful solution following the signing of the Bougainville Peace Agreement in August 2001 — one of the 26 agreements signed in the pursuit of peace, normalcy and a political settlement on Bougainville since 1989.

A ceasefire agreement between the warring parties — the Bougainville Revolutionary Army and Papua New Guinea — was signed in 1998, followed three years later by a peace agreement. During those years, a regional group composed of representatives from all over the Pacific region was sent to monitor the peace in Bougainville — first a Truce Monitoring Group, followed by a Peace Monitoring Group. The Group was unarmed, unlike in other post-conflict peacebuilding processes around the world.

Within the span of those years, the Peace Process Consultative Committee was formed, which also included the Bougainville Constitutional Commission and the Interim Joint Supervisory Body, all in the name of peace and normalcy.

Papua New Guinea remained committed to a peaceful solution through every available means. My Government therefore continued to give the people of Bougainville every opportunity to participate fully in the reconciliation process, which led to the Peace Agreement signed in August 2001 and finally to the election of the autonomous Bougainville Government, which is continuing today.

The Agreement was then given the force of the highest law in the land as a result of the Papua New Guinea Parliament's decision to amend our national Constitution by adding the new part XIV and passing the Organic Law on Peacebuilding in Bougainville. The deal guaranteed a referendum on independence in 10 to 15 years, promised more autonomy in the interim, and set out a plan for weapons disposal.

In December 2004, the Papua New Guinea Government approved the Bougainville Constitution, laying the ground for elections. That decision, in many respects, was the culmination of longstanding dreams and of a commitment made real through years of protracted struggle and negotiations leading up to the Bougainville Peace Agreement.

The way in which that decision was made — on a bipartisan basis, with overwhelming support and without any votes against it — showed how important issues and principles can bring together leaders and people from all parts of a country — in our case, Papua New Guinea — with otherwise diverse interests and opinions.

The spirit and detailed provisions of the national constitutional laws have been further developed through the making and implementation of the

Constitution for the Autonomous Region of Bougainville.

Like our national Constitution, the Bougainville Constitution is also "homegrown" — made and adopted by leaders following close consultations with people in all parts of Bougainville, as well as Bougainvilleans in other parts of Papua New Guinea, within the framework of our national Constitution, as amended to give legal effect to the Bougainville Peace Agreement.

The first general election for the Autonomous Bougainville Government, to be established under the Bougainville Constitution, is currently under way and is the next critical stage in giving substance to the Agreement. The election marks a new beginning for the people of Bougainville as candidates compete for public support, as the public takes part in voting and as officials gear up for the inauguration of the first Autonomous Bougainville Government next month.

Leaders now in the race for the province's top post played many significant roles and risked their lives in the search for peace and normalcy for the people of Bougainville. Now that the conflict is over, the Bougainville Peace Agreement has been completed and given the force of law and arrangements for the first elections are under way, Bougainvilleans are keenly participating in choosing the leaders who will be responsible for ensuring that normalcy returns and for setting priorities for future development in Bougainville. The general elections are under way right at this moment.

We believe that the election is a good example of a United Nations-brokered peace deal. I think that is well reflected in the subject of today's meeting. The people of Bougainville have been waiting patiently for this opportunity and are now going out in their numbers to polling stations to cast their votes for candidates of their choice. The voting system is first-past-the-post.

There is very high public enthusiasm to see the Autonomous Bougainville Government take office in the middle of June — next month. The atmosphere on the ground is generally calm and strongly in favour of the election. As might be expected, there have been two incidents, but the situation is otherwise peaceful and orderly. The electoral process is moving ahead according to plan. The calm and purposeful way in which the election is being held shows how thoroughly preparations have been made. More importantly, it underlines how eager people around Bougainville are to play their part in choosing Bougainville's future political leaders and to get on with their lives.

The Bougainville election should be seen as the model for others who have been experiencing similar conflicts. It took real commitment by the leaders and people of Bougainville to achieve peace and to choose the type of government that they believe will bring about development and prosperity.

The election would not be running smoothly without necessary and generous funding from friendly nations. There have been a lot of friendly nations in this Council Chamber over the last couple of years who have helped us. The funds made possible the purchase of communications equipment to link the three main centres where votes will be counted when voting concludes on June 2. The results will be officially declared on 9 June. Our Prime Minister has been invited to officially open the Bougainville House of Representatives, which is scheduled to meet on 25 June.

The assistance provided demonstrates practical support for the parties' commitment and the progress being made in implementing the Bougainville Peace Agreement and the laws that give it legal effect. The assistance also signifies the interest the international community is taking in the first general election for the Autonomous Bougainville Government.

In conclusion, I wish to record here — and I will record it again next month, when the mandate ends — on behalf of my Government and the people of Papua New Guinea our deep appreciation for the contribution of the United Nations in ensuring that the peace process was maintained and the weapons disposal process completed before the election commenced on 20 May 2005. I thank all members for allowing me to speak today.

The President: Following consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council.

> "The Security Council reaffirms its commitment to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and recalls its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Security Council considers post-conflict peacebuilding closely linked to its primary responsibilities.

"The Security Council recognizes that intra-State conflicts and States emerging from conflict are among the most complex challenges facing the international community and that responding to these challenges in most instances requires a coherent and integrated mix of peacebuilding and peacekeeping activities, including political, military, civilian, humanitarian and development activities.

"The Security Council acknowledges that serious attention to the longer-term process of peacebuilding in all its multiple dimensions is critically important and that adequate support for peacebuilding activities can help to prevent countries from relapsing into conflict.

"The Security Council underlines that priorities in the post-conflict environment should include, where appropriate: protection of civilians; disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration and rehabilitation of former combatants; security sector and economic and social reform; the end of impunity; establishment and re-establishment of the institutions of government, the rule of law and transitional justice, respect for human rights; and economic revitalization.

"The Security Council recognizes the key role played by the United Nations, including the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies, in peacebuilding alongside the international financial institutions, in particular the World Bank, bilateral donors and troop contributors. It also acknowledges the role the private sector can play in countries emerging from conflict. The Security Council underlines that a successful outcome of post-conflict peacebuilding activities depends on the sustained commitment of all relevant actors to the process, through the involvement of these actors and the coordination of their activities in all phases from planning through implementation. In this regard, the Council also stresses the importance of pursuing coherent policies and resource allocation between these United Nations entities, taking into account their respective mandates. The Council recalls the report of 21 August 2000 by the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/305) and the recommendations therein, and welcomes the progress made since the publication of the report, not least as regards planning of peacekeeping operations.

"The Security Council underlines that for countries emerging from conflict significant international assistance for economic and social rehabilitation and reconstruction is indispensable. In this regard the Security Council acknowledges the role that the Economic and Social Council plays, including in sustainable development, and reiterates its willingness to improve cooperation with United Nations bodies and organs directly concerned with peacebuilding.

"The Security Council underlines the importance of national ownership of the transition process from the end of a conflict to the attainment of lasting peace and sustainable development and the need for the international community to support nationally owned peacebuilding priorities. The Security Council recognizes the positive role played by local stakeholders and encourages dialogue between the United Nations and relevant national actors. The Council encourages capacity-building in order to respond to the country-specific circumstances of each conflict situation. One goal of this capacity-building — and of peacebuilding generally — should be to promote the establishment of self-supporting national authorities and thus the evolution of international assistance from peace support to longer-term development.

"The Security Council recognizes the crucial role of regional and subregional organizations in post-conflict peacebuilding and their involvement at the earliest possible stage. The Security Council realizes that a clear regional perspective is necessary, as most conflicts have interlocking political, security, humanitarian and economic dynamics across borders. The Council underscores in this respect the need for enhanced cooperation and, where appropriate, coordination between United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in peacebuilding, based on a more integrated approach and with the aim of maximizing use of available resources and capabilities.

"The Security Council stresses the importance of a comprehensive international and regional approach to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants that is not limited to the political and security aspects, but also addresses its social and economic aspects, including special needs of child soldiers and women.

"The Security Council stresses the special needs of Africa in post-conflict situations and encourages the international community to pay particular attention to those needs. It welcomes the ever-closer partnership between the African Union, the African subregional organizations and the United Nations in the area of peacemaking and peacekeeping and stresses the importance of extending this partnership to peacebuilding efforts.

"The Security Council underscores the importance of cooperation between United Nations peacekeeping operations and the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies. The Security Council stresses the importance of ensuring that planning and implementation of United Nations humanitarian, peacekeeping, political and developmental activities at country level are well coordinated system-wide, including through the development of shared strategic objectives. The Security Council stresses that the United Nations should function as one integrated entity at country level under effective overall leadership in post-conflict peacebuilding.

"The Security Council stresses the need to ensure adequate and timely financing for peacebuilding priorities at all stages of the peace process, and stresses the need for sustained financial investment in peacebuilding over the medium to longer-term period of recovery. It recognizes the importance of rapid initiation of peacebuilding activities to meet immediate needs and encourages the building of capabilities that can be incorporated rapidly.

"The Security Council welcomes the submission of the report of 21 March 2005 by the Secretary-General 'In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all' (A/59/2005) and of the report by the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change 'A more secure world: our shared responsibility'. The Security Council acknowledges institutional gaps, identified in the reports, in the United Nations institutional machinery with respect to effectively, coherently, and comprehensively helping countries with transition from conflict to lasting peace and sustainable development.

"The Security Council takes note with interest of the important proposal by the Secretary-General to establish a Peacebuilding Commission and shares the objective of improving United Nations capacity to coordinate with donors and troop contributors and to perform peacebuilding activities, in particular from the start of peacekeeping operations through stabilization, reconstruction and development. The Security Council recognizes the important role that this body could play to bridge the gap between maintenance of international peace and security and the work of humanitarian and economic development assistance."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2005/20.

There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5188

Security Council

Sixtieth year

Provisional

5188th meeting

Friday, 27 May 2005, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Møller/Ms. Løj	(Denmark)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. El Hadj Ali
	Argentina	Mr. García Moritán
	Benin	Mr. Babadoudou
	Brazil	Mr. Sardenberg
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Mr. Kitaoka
	Philippines	Mr. Mercado
	Romania	Mr. Motoc
	Russian Federation	Mr. Denisov
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Manongi
	United States of America	Mr. Holliday

Agenda

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (S/2005/335)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (S/2005/335)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Albania, Luxembourg, Serbia and Montenegro, Switzerland and Ukraine, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Nebojsa Covic, President of the Coordination Centre of Serbia and Montenegro and of the Republic of Serbia for Kosovo and Metohija, and invite him to take a seat at the Council table.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Covic (President of the Coordination Centre of Serbia and Montenegro and of the Republic of Serbia for Kosovo and Metohija) took a seat at the Council table; the representatives of the other aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Søren Jessen-Petersen, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Jessen-Petersen to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them documents S/2005/335 and Corrigendum 1, which contain the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. I should also like to call the attention of the members of the Council to document S/2005/329, which contains a letter dated 18 May 2005 from the representative of Serbia and Montenegro addressed to the President of the Security Council.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Søren Jessen-Petersen, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo.

I now give him the floor.

Mr. Jessen-Petersen: Let me begin, Sir, by congratulating you as the President of the Council. You will appreciate my particular pleasure in seeing Denmark in the chair today. I also want to thank you personally for honouring us with your presence in the Chamber today.

The three-month period since my last appearance before the Security Council has been a challenging one. The progress made — and let there be no doubt that there has been progress — must be seen in the context of the challenges that Kosovo has faced.

In particular, March 2005 saw some very difficult moments. The Government that was formed in December 2004 made good progress through its first 100 days, and the momentum was considerable. However, in early March, a few days after my last report to this Council, that Government came to an end when Prime Minister Haradinaj resigned following notification of an imminent indictment from the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Within 24 hours following his indictment, and after appealing for calm and for a continuation of progress in building a democratic society in Kosovo, Mr. Haradinaj proceeded voluntarily to The Hague.

During those days, Kosovo showed the region and the world commendable respect for the judicial process. Democracy was respected, and a new Government, continuing the coalition of the two parties — the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) and the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK) — and under the leadership of Bajram Kosumi as Prime Minister, was formed within three weeks. Throughout those difficult days and weeks, the political leaders and citizens of Kosovo managed a highly unusual situation with maturity and without any disorder or instability.

In particular, standards implementation stayed on track. The brief delay around the time of the formation of the Government was quickly overcome. The new Government showed the same commitment to moving forward on standards and made continued progress on its programme during the months of April and May.

As in most new democracies — and let us remember that democracy in Kosovo is only a few years old — there is political tension. For the first time in its recent history, Kosovo has a strong opposition, under the leadership of Hashim Thaci and Veton Surroi, which, as everywhere, is critical of the work of the Government, while in agreement on the overall goals for Kosovo.

In order to manage any tensions more constructively, and in view of the critical period ahead for Kosovo and the significant political issues coming up, I decided to propose bringing political party leaders and the President of Kosovo together in a forum. The purpose of this forum is to enhance constructive dialogue and ensure maximum possible consensus on critical and crucial issues, without substituting for constitutional forums. My proposal was met with agreement, and I will convene the first meeting of the Kosovo Forum next week.

I am glad to report some positive developments on dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade. The first direct dialogue meetings since March 2004 resumed one year later, beginning with the Working Group on Missing Persons on 16 March.

That was followed by meetings in April and May on the key issues of energy and returns of displaced persons. These Working Group meetings will take place on a regular basis in Belgrade and Pristina, and they are supported by intermediate technical meetings to work on substantive issues. This dialogue not only serves to make progress on the specific issues, which range from humanitarian to economic, but it is also an important sign of building confidence, which is crucial as we move closer towards status discussions.

We need to continue encouraging political dialogue. I welcome the fact that Pristina and Belgrade have now expressed their readiness to engage in high-level political dialogue. It is vital that political leaders begin to talk with each other sooner rather than later. Pristina and Belgrade have every mutual interest in coexisting and interacting peacefully and constructively.

Over the past months we have witnessed greater engagement and dialogue with the Serbian Orthodox Church. The Church and the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Kosovo signed a memorandum of understanding on 25 March to allow for the reconstruction of Serbian Orthodox religious sites. That followed a lengthy delay due to talks within the Church on how to proceed. The Provisional Institutions had already allocated €4.2 million last year and are now actively considering earmarking an additional €1.5 million for reconstruction of Serbian Orthodox religious sites that were damaged during the March 2004 violence.

It is obvious that long-term preservation of cultural heritage in Kosovo, which includes Serbian Orthodox, Ottoman/Islamic, Catholic and vernacular sites, must become an increasing priority in the coming months. In this context, I would like to mention the successful international donors conference for the protection and preservation of cultural heritage of all communities in Kosovo, held two weeks ago in the UNESCO headquarters in Paris with the support of that organization, the European Union, the Council of Europe and others. Participants pledged some €10 million and technical assistance in a clear expression of support for the cultural heritage in Kosovo. A technical mission to restore a church in Prizren, supported by UNESCO, took place just a few weeks ago, and more will now follow.

However, the news is not all good. Despite recent encouraging developments on dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade, I am concerned that, after more than 15 months, there is still no clear signal from Belgrade to the Kosovo Serbs to participate in the institutions. Dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade, although welcome and important, cannot substitute for the direct involvement of the Kosovo Serbs in shaping their own future in an internal dialogue in Kosovo.

Progress in Kosovo will continue even without the meaningful participation of the Kosovo Serbs, but progress in establishing a fully multi-ethnic Kosovo and integrating all communities will remain limited as long as one ethnic group is pressured to stay outside the political, economic and social processes. The fault for this obstacle to progress does not lie with Pristina. The victims, however, are the Kosovo Serbs who are eager to participate at this crucial moment. Those who oppose progress can always find some reason to defer allowing participation, but recent trends have proven that bolder engagement can actually foster real progress for the benefit of all. In my view, Belgrade would help the Kosovo Serb community and itself by moving from reticence and delay to commitment and engagement in that area.

Standards implementation remains the road map for the short term but also for the long term. It is a way of building and strengthening democracy and a multi-ethnic society, and it is also a way for Kosovo to move progressively towards European integration.

We have seen a continued strong commitment by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government during the reporting period. The structures working on standards implementation have shown themselves to be solid and durable. While we recognize that there is still much to do, the trends in a number of areas have been positive, and that is reflected in my technical assessment (S/2005/335, annex I). We feel that the authorities, and increasingly the citizens, have understood the need to implement standards and have made efforts to reach out to the minorities.

Let me say a few words on some specific issues.

Decentralization, or local government reform, is not a standard as such, but it is an important process. Decentralization will benefit the population as a whole. It will bring services closer to the citizens, and it will also help meet minority concerns.

After some hesitation following its formation, the Government has acted. A steering board and five working groups have been established and are convening, including two meetings held this week, on legislation and on pilot projects which are to be established shortly. The Kosovo Serbs were invited to, and participated in, those meetings, and thus had the opportunity to shape the process. I would also add that Belgrade was invited to join the Kosovo Serb delegation and that we were, of course, flexible on the modalities. But Belgrade again failed to respond. Regrettably, the post of Deputy Minister for Local Government Administration, reserved for a Kosovo Serb, still remains vacant.

As we push for further progress on decentralization, I believe that the recent Contact Group agreement on the principle of "no partition of Kosovo" sends a clear signal that the majority community has no reason to fear that meaningful decentralization would be a cover for the division of Kosovo. On the contrary, if well conceived and implemented, it should eventually promote coexistence around the efficient sharing of local capacities and resources.

I would add that we are currently looking at a number of initiatives that could be carried out prior to full-scale decentralization and that could empower municipalities, for example, in the field of policing and the administration of justice.

Security has further improved, and this is key as it is a basis for progress in all areas. I want to pay tribute again to the Commander of the Kosovo Force (KFOR) and his forces, whose excellent work and close coordination with the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Kosovo Police Service (KPS) is playing a key role in maintaining a safe and secure environment in Kosovo.

The environment has indeed been generally calm during the reporting period, with only a few incidents of note. In particular, very little occurred in the way of inter-ethnic incidents. Unfortunately, the Commander of KFOR and I are concerned — and we have repeatedly said so — that, partly due to deliberate misinformation, the perception of security remains a problem and leads to mainly self-imposed limits on freedom of movement. There is a tendency in some media to generalize and misrepresent every incident involving Kosovo Serbs. Before a police investigation has even begun, some journalists, and some politicians, pronounce an event to be ethnically motivated, thus feeding the fears of the Kosovo Serb community, including internally displaced persons. In most cases we find after thorough professional investigations that such assertions have no foundation.

There are also assertions that perpetrators are not sentenced. That, too, is simply misinformation. As a recent example, six Kosovo Albanians were found guilty of the murder of two Kosovo Serbs in March 2004 and were sentenced to a total of 38 years by the Gnjilane District Court just last week. It is also worth noting that in recent meetings with senior UNMIK officials, Serbian cabinet ministers have indicated that the Kosovo Serb population's trust in the Kosovo Police Service has indeed increased. As the Council may be aware, the KPS has a minority component of approximately 16 per cent, and Kosovo Serbs make up approximately 10 per cent of the KPS. I might add another example of progress: of 29 lay judges sworn in at the end of April, 16 were minority community members, of which 13 were Kosovo Serbs.

There are signs, and evidence, of increased freedom of movement by Kosovo Serbs, although there are still too many who do not feel free to move. A sign of the improving environment is the reduction of escorts and of the military and police presence at specific sites and locations. To give a recent example, at the beginning of this month, the first Serbian play to be performed since the end of the conflict was presented at Kosovo's main theatre in Pristina; it was prepared and performed by Serbs, with a large Serb attendance.

The number of returns of displaced persons is still disappointingly low. The Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, UNMIK and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) continue to work hard on improving conditions for returns so that displaced persons can return to Kosovo if they so choose. I recently met with displaced persons in Serbia and with returnees in Kosovo, and I can report to the Council that their main concern is no longer primarily security. Rather, they are concerned about property issues and the lack of economic prospects.

There has been some qualitative progress in returns. For example, we have the first urban return to the town of Klina. My visits to returnees in several areas, including Bablyak and Brestovik, have convinced me that conditions exist to allow tomorrow's returns to take place and that positive encouragement by responsible politicians, in both Pristina and Belgrade, can convince more displaced persons to return to Kosovo.

There have been increased efforts on returns on the part of the Kosovo Government. That includes personal appeals by the Prime Minister to potential returnees and visits to Podgorica and to Skopje by the Minister of Returns — himself a Serb — and the Minister of Local Government Administration. Those visits have resulted in better understanding and improved regional cooperation, as well as in agreements with regional partners, as for example a recent protocol on returns with Montenegro. The Working Group on Returns, held on 12 May between Pristina and Belgrade under the chairmanship of UNHCR, was a successful first meeting and will continue. In a very positive development, the respective heads of delegations from Pristina and Belgrade met in Pristina to discuss issues of substance in a productive bilateral working meeting just a couple of days ago.

As regards functioning democratic institutions, I can report that the rapid formation of the new Government in March showed continued evidence of a stable political situation. The Assembly of Kosovo has lately shown itself to be a more transparent and democratic place for debate according to the established rules. The recent debate on decentralization, held five or six days ago, was clearly a step forward. I and colleagues from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe will continue to provide assistance and advice to the Assembly presidency to ensure that that key institution functions democratically, as I trust it will.

We are rigorously stressing the need for local ownership, and the policy of transfer of competences to the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government has continued. We are at this point carefully looking at transfer in police and justice areas, where we can transfer competencies short of sovereignty in order to ensure that the local authorities assume maximum responsibility and accountability, also in the area of security.

We have continued to support the efforts of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government to coordinate and strengthen institutional capacity-building. The Prime Minister has given full political backing to an initiative of the Provisional Institutions, supported by UNMIK and the international community, to draw up a strategic plan in order to guide assistance and help focus on priorities. It is expected that the strategic plan will be developed by the summer and will serve as a basis for better targeting and coordinating donor efforts, so that we can build up the institutions that Kosovo needs. It is clear that considerable donor assistance will be necessary in a number of sectors over the coming months and years.

On accountability, the policy we developed has served as an incitement to the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government to address accountability problems and take corrective measures where necessary. UNMIK is prepared to take action if and when appropriate, but counts on the Provisional Institutions to assume their responsibilities directly.

There have been some significant developments on economic issues that have helped, to some extent, to improve the investment climate, including in the areas of privatization, access to loans from the European Investment Bank, and long-term lease possibilities for investors. However, I must stress that the extremely problematic economic conditions could at any moment lead to social instability, as they would in any society with high unemployment and continued stagnation. In spite of our efforts to make the investment climate more attractive and to stimulate the economy, it is clear that there will be no real progress until the status issue is resolved.

In conclusion, let me stress again that, according to realistic and fact-based criteria, Kosovo has seen steady further improvement during the reporting period. At the same time, the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government know that much still needs to be done in key standards areas, and we are pursuing the shortcomings on a daily basis.

We must, however, recognize that the pace of further progress on standards implementation is reliant on several factors. First, it depends on the willingness of the majority community to continue to make efforts to create a multi-ethnic and democratic Kosovo. That willingness does exist, despite the recent painful conflict, and we must and will continue to support those who display that willingness. Secondly, the degree of Kosovo Serb participation will influence the extent to which their interests are reflected in the ongoing standards implementation. Here, as we have urged repeatedly, Belgrade must give a clear, positive signal. Thirdly, status resolution and the ensuing certainty will mean that we can make faster and more substantial progress on a range of issues.

I want to be very frank: with a resolution of the status issue, and therefore an end to the uncertainty, I am confident that we will see much more significant results on issues such as returns, freedom of movement and the economy. Status resolution will also have clear regional benefits, including for regional dialogue and trade. There are clearly limits to the results on regional integration that can be achieved without having certainty on status. Leaving it pending will delay regional integration and adversely affect the interests of all, including Belgrade, Podgorica, Skopje and Tirana. In my meetings with regional partners, the interest in seeing status resolution is strong.

We are all working towards the same ultimate goal: stabilizing the region and the pursuit of the European perspective. European integration is vital for Kosovo and for the region. It will serve, as it has elsewhere, to break down borders and ensure greater prosperity for everybody.

As Council members will have seen in his report, the Secretary-General believes that a comprehensive review of standards should be initiated this summer. That comprehensive review can, inter alia, draw on existing structures and working groups in Pristina to support its work on reviewing the standards, and all interested parties will no doubt have a chance to make their voices heard.

I am confident that progress will continue in the interest of all communities in Kosovo, based on a forward-looking, constructive and honest approach by all concerned. The role of the Security Council in moving Kosovo from a holding operation to a sustainable and lasting solution is crucial, and I thank its members for their support.

The President: I thank Mr. Jessen-Petersen for his briefing of the Security Council.

I shall now give the floor to Mr. Nebojsa Covic, President of the Coordination Centre of Serbia and Montenegro and of the Republic of Serbia for Kosovo and Metohija.

Mr. Covic (Serbia and Montenegro) (*spoke in Serbian; English text provided by the delegation*): It is my special pleasure to greet the members of the Security Council on behalf of the Council of Ministers of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro and on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, and to express my pleasure at having this opportunity to participate in today's meeting on Kosovo and Metohija. I also thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report.

We have just heard yet another technical briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General regarding the situation in Kosovo and Metohija. Every opportunity we have to inform the international community about the extremely difficult position of the Serbian and other non-Albanian communities in the province is extremely important to us. Today's meeting, however, is of special significance. That is because, if talks on the future status are to begin on the basis of the report and the recommendations of the Secretary-General for launching a comprehensive review of the standards implementation, we have to have concrete and not imaginary progress in Kosovo and Metohija.

Let us go back, for a moment, to the Security Council meeting in February and to the technical report presented on that occasion. I would like to remind the Security Council that the aforesaid report commented critically on and indicated the absence of results in achieving standards, particularly in the area of respect for the rights of the non-Albanian communities. However, the report before us today notes significant progress and implies that the prescribed standards have been met or are in the final phase of being met. Such progress, had it really been made in such a short period of time, would no doubt be an amazing feat. Alas, the reality in Kosovo and Metohija is quite different.

Regrettably, the briefing we heard today links the most important problems to the Kosovo and Metohija Serbs and to the Government of the Republic of Serbia and its authorities. In view of the fact that Serbs and other non-Albanians live isolated in enclaves precisely because their safety is jeopardized and there is no freedom of movement, the statement that freedom of movement exists in all municipalities in the province, except in the northern part of Kosovska Mitrovica, is inaccurate. Allow me to remind the Council that the seat of the District Court is in the northern part of Kosovska Mitrovica, and that the President of the Court and all other employees are members of the Albanian national community. They come to work every day with no problem whatsoever, and we sincerely hope that the same level of freedom of movement will soon be achieved for minority communities in all other parts of Kosovo and Metohija.

The report should not have omitted mention of the fact that there are still 230,000 internally displaced Serbs and other non-Albanians who cannot return to their homes — not because they do not want to, but because the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and KFOR cannot guarantee their safety and freedom of movement. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in the past six years around 12,000 internally displaced persons have returned, 5,000 of whom are Serbs. However, despite the officially proclaimed support for returns that was expressed on several occasions, one more so-called year of returns is passing, and there are no results.

Most of the activities of potential returnees more or less boil down to visits to their demolished, burned-down homes and desecrated graveyards. We sincerely hope that this year we will witness a transformation and that the representatives of UNMIK and of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government will agree to sign, with us, a protocol on organized returns which would break the deadlock, initiate the process and make it more efficient. That would entail more energetic measures regarding the eviction of those who, threatening violence, are illegally using Serbian property. Further, it should be kept in mind that, of the 27,000 court decisions that have been handed down in the last six years on the restitution of usurped property to its rightful owners, only 300 have actually been carried out.

The report should also have included data on 150 demolished, burned-down Serbian churches and monasteries, 60 of which, being sites of the highest importance, enjoy a high level of protection. While these holy sites await reconstruction, they are quietly being taken apart, brick by brick, and any trace of their existence is being destroyed.

The report does not mention the fact that the Assembly and the Government of Kosovo and Metohija are not truly multi-ethnic, since no protection is provided for non-Albanian communities against outvoting. Kosovo and Metohija Serbs participate in those institutions in which they stand a chance of achieving goals related to their vital interests, particularly in those municipalities in which they won the last local elections. Nor does the report make mention of the illegal privatization of Serbian property, which continues in the absence of any strategy for an economic recovery or for finding solutions to the problem of high unemployment. The report does not reflect sufficiently on the problem of organized crime — a problem that even Albanian parliamentary parties point out as an evil that permeates all segments of life in the province.

I believe that the Council will agree that reports should not be written to satisfy only one side. But, leaving aside embellished reports on the "virtual reality" of Kosovo and Metohija, I would like to use this opportunity to point out yet another worrisome aspect of the activities of the United Nations administration in the province, which has a mandate to implement resolution 1244 (1999) impartially. Unfortunately, the steps that were taken recently considerably jeopardize the credibility not only of UNMIK but of the United Nations as a whole and call into question the impartiality of the role they should play in future processes. By making a politically sensitive request to obtain a special international dialling code, a special international code for Pristina airport, and through international visits by representatives of the Provisional Institutions without the presence of UNMIK officials and other similar initiatives, creating the impression internationally that Kosovo and Metohija is a completely separate entity, the interests and requests of only one community living in the province are being catered to, thus severely violating resolution 1244 (1999) and prejudging the future status of the province.

The most recent initiative regarding the establishment of the Kosovo Forum, meant to consolidate the Kosovo and Metohija Albanian leadership and to provide a framework within which they should prepare themselves for negotiations on future status, speaks volumes in favour of my claim. I would like to remind the Council that UNMIK is not present in the province to cater to the objectives and interests of one community only, regardless of the size of that particular community and regardless of the possible consequences of that community's dissatisfaction if its one-sided requests are not met.

It is only human to want to show the success that has been achieved, and I can understand that. Likewise, I can understand the need of the international community to direct its attention and resources to other hotbeds of tension around the world. However, I will reiterate once again that by writing embellished reports that serve to satisfy those needs, a poor compromise is made for the Albanian majority. This will not be conducive to achieving a modern, democratic, multi-ethnic society — something we defined at the very beginning as our common objective.

We therefore welcome the balanced approach that the Secretary-General has taken in his political assessment and recommendations.

As always, the authorities in Belgrade are trying to facilitate the process of achieving this common goal of ours by adopting a constructive approach, and we stand united in our view that working towards a truly democratic and multi-ethnic society is the only path to follow. At this point, however, I would like to stress the cornerstone of the State policy of Belgrade: that State borders cannot be changed, and that, in the process of finding a solution to the future status of Kosovo and Metohija, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Serbia and the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro cannot be questioned.

We are ready to seek, in cooperation with all international actors and through direct dialogue with Pristina, a peaceful, comprehensive and permanent solution to the Kosovo and Metohija problem, which includes the full implementation of resolution 1244 (1999). The President and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia have extended invitations to both the President and the Prime Minister of Kosovo and Metohija for a direct dialogue.

Although there has been no positive reply from Pristina, the invitation to a sincere dialogue, without any conditions, stands. It should focus on the very heart of the problem, because we believe that a direct dialogue is the only option if solutions are to be found to the problems faced by our citizens living in the province. We hope that the leaders of the Kosovo and Metohija Albanians will in this case, too, demonstrate a growing political awareness and readiness for dialogue. As we announced at the last meeting, we have reactivated the Working Group on missing and kidnapped persons, the Working Group on returns and the Working Group on energy, as agreed during the Vienna process, while the reactivation of the Working Group for transportation and communications is expected in the next few weeks.

We are currently defining modalities for participation in the work of the working group on decentralization — a working group we consider to be the most important indicator of the multi-ethnic character of the Provisional Institutions of Self-

Government. We have also proposed the establishment of two more working groups for technical dialogue, a working group for privatization and a working group for environmental protection, but we have not yet received a reply.

During all the discussions we have had recently with representatives of the international community regarding the pace of the process of finding a solution to the Kosovo and Metohija problems, we have been reassured that no automatism will be applied in this process and that concrete results in achieving our common objective have to precede every new step. Should the report that was presented today be taken as the objective state of affairs in the field, it would serve as the basis for the very automatic action that has so far been resolutely ruled out as a possibility. If a formal evaluation based on this report commences — despite the fact that, realistically speaking, standards have not yet been adequately met — we hope that the new Special Envoy in charge of evaluating the progress achieved will demonstrate a high level of impartiality and personal integrity and that he will summon enough courage to present the situation in Kosovo and Metohija as it really is.

It would be counterproductive to open the status discussions before the standards — the basic provisions of resolution 1244 (1999) — have been substantively implemented. According to the relevant indicators, Kosovo and Metohija is a long way from such implementation. However, should it be decided, in spite of everything, to commence talks on future status. those discussions would be burdened with the extremism of the Albanian leaders, who will perceive erroneously that the international community is yielding to their policy of ethnic cleansing. The issue of future status must be resolved through reaching agreements and finding a compromise, but, above all, in full respect of the basic international principle of preserving the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Serbia and the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro.

As a high-level official of a powerful country recently put it, the road signs to the future are being hurriedly put in place in Kosovo and Metohija. Whether these road signs will lead the Serbian and other non-Albanian communities to a modern, democratic and multi-ethnic society and guide the region towards stability and its future within the European Union, without changing the internationally recognized borders, depends on all of us.

Mr. De La Sablière (France) (*spoke in French*): The Permanent Representative of Luxembourg will shortly make a statement on behalf of the Presidency of the European Union and I associate myself with that statement in advance.

At the outset, Mr. Minister, I would like to welcome your presence in the Chair at this important meeting. I thank Mr. Nebojsa Covic, President of the Coordination Centre of Serbia and Montenegro and of the Republic of Serbia for Kosovo, for his presence and for his statement. I also thank Mr. Søren Jessen-Petersen for his briefing and for the work that he and the personnel of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) are doing on the ground.

We have before us an excellent report (S/2005/335) of the Secretary-General on the situation in Kosovo. France fully shares its observations on meaningful progress made by the people of Kosovo. I particularly welcome the fact that security today has been restored throughout Kosovo thanks to the efforts of everyone, in particular the Kosovo Force (KFOR), which is doing an excellent job. Considerable effort is still necessary in many areas, as correctly underscored by the Secretary-General, but we are aware that implementation of standards for Kosovo will be a long-term effort. The key is to have undertaken this effort and to support it.

France also appreciates the value of the encouraging signs coming from Belgrade, and it welcomes them. We know how difficult it is, after arduous years, to make conciliatory gestures, but such gestures are necessary if we want to hasten the solution of the last conflict in the heart of Europe. We are also encouraged by President Tadic's offer to meet soon with President Rugova and by the planned meeting between the Prime Ministers of Serbia and of Kosovo. Pristina and Belgrade need to step up their contacts at all political and technical levels.

I should also like to reaffirm our desire for Serbia and Montenegro to be fully associated with the emerging negotiation process. In exchange, the Belgrade authorities need to put an end to their tactic of obstruction, which prevents Kosovo Serbs from participating in the public institutions of Kosovo. The "vacant chair policy" entails major risks that the history of Kosovo will be written without the Kosovo Serbs. We appeal to reason at this critical time, when the destiny of the territory is at stake.

France supports the recommendation of the Secretary-General to launch a comprehensive evaluation of the situation and to appoint a Special Envoy for that purpose. Indeed, in December 2003 the Council undertook a comprehensive strategy aimed at ending, in full accordance with resolution 1244 (1999), the unacceptable status quo. One of the key elements of that strategy was to carry out a comprehensive review of the implementation of standards at mid-2005. The time has come to carry out that review objectively and calmly. This is a question of consistency for the Council and for the international community.

I would like to underscore here that the outcome of the comprehensive review is not a foregone conclusion. That is no mere formulaic statement: we need to give the Special Envoy the necessary time to carry out this work without being locked into an artificial timetable. We need to then consider how to follow up the recommendations. No one should prejudge them. It is progress that will determine the timetable.

My country also supports the conditions that the Secretary-General has established with respect to continuing the process. First, progress needs to be intensified, especially in the priority areas related to the rights of the Kosovo Serbs. Clearly, we need to know whether and how the Kosovo Serbs will be able to continue to live in Kosovo or to return under conditions that are consistent with law, equity and the standards that prevail in Europe today. Major efforts are still needed to give full effect to the rights of the Kosovo Serbs in such areas as freedom of movement; basic conditions conducive to the return of refugees and displaced persons, including the question of ownership rights and the economy; and the protection of Serb religious sites and memorials.

We also expect concrete, decisive progress in the area of decentralization. But let us not mislead ourselves: this is a challenge for all of Kosovo, and not only for a minority. It would be regrettable if ethnic confrontations or partisan politicking delayed the implementation of this key goal with respect to the modernization of Kosovo's public institutions.

I would like to underscore that we will remain vigilant on these issues, particularly through the quarterly reports that the Secretary-General will continue to provide to the Security Council. It is my hope that we will be able to continue to move forward towards a settlement of this conflict to the benefit to all those living in Kosovo and throughout the region.

Mr. Motoc (Romania): My delegation is delighted, Mr. Minister, to see you personally chairing the second important meeting of the Council in a row. As I will point out further on, it seems that more that one connection can be established between these meetings.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his carefully balanced report on the situation in Kosovo (S2005/335). I would also like to thank the Special Representative for his briefing today, for his work in Kosovo and for providing us with a useful technical assessment of standards implementation.

As always, we convey our appreciation and gratitude to the men and women of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo UNMIK) and its partners on the ground — the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) — and well as to the Kosovo Force (KFOR). Romania would like to assure the Special Representative of its full support.

I welcome the participation at this important meeting of the representative of Serbia and Montenegro, Minister Nebojsa Covic, President of the Coordination Centre of Kosovo and Metohija.

Romania fully associates itself with the statement that will be made shortly by Ambassador Hoscheit of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union.

Romania is pleased to note that the "standards before status" policy, designed in accordance with resolution 1244 (1999), is starting to bear fruit. We welcome in this regard the continuing trend reported by the Secretary-General in standards implementation. We welcome in particular the cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and the subsequent demonstration of the growing political maturity of Kosovo's leaders. Romania concurs with the Secretary-General that standards are above all goals in and of themselves. They are the roadmap not only to the political process to determine the future status of Kosovo, but also to the very connection to and integration with the larger European family.

Indications of the growing investment that Belgrade and Pristina are making in the sectoral dialogue are encouraging, but the recently expressed readiness to engage in political dialogue as well must be supported so that it can materialize.

We encourage the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government and the inhabitants of Kosovo, of all ethnicities, to keep up and enhance efforts for a stable, democratic, tolerant and truly multi-ethnic Kosovo, and we support those efforts. However, the day when a Kosovo Serb or Albanian walks freely, fearlessly and in full dignity anywhere in Kosovo is not here yet. That was one of the promises of resolution 1244 (1999), and the Security Council must continue to uphold it.

In this context, we share the concern of the Secretary-General that deficiencies remain in all categories of standards, including in key priority areas. Much remains to be done, and we need to see more concrete, tangible results in many fields, such as returns, freedom of movement, rule of law and protection and preservation of the religious and cultural heritage. The provisional authorities of Kosovo need to accelerate the implementation of the standards policy.

Given the current situation in Kosovo, and considering that uncertainty neither benefits regional stability nor encourages the sustained efforts needed for creating a tolerant and democratic environment, a comprehensive review of the implementation could be initiated, as recommended by the Secretary-General. We believe that this review should be seen as a means to encourage the further implementation of the standards by showing which specific areas need to be addressed most urgently. We also believe that the Council should look beyond this first comprehensive review and plan accordingly for a continuation of the review mechanism.

The process on Kosovo is of paramount importance for the entire region, and understandably, it is followed with great attention by political leaders and public opinion in South-East Europe.

Recently, the heads of State and Government of countries participating in the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP), meeting in Bucharest, expressed support for the full implementation of the standards policy and for respect for Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). They called for a renewed and constructive dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade. The leaders of South-East Europe also declared that the process of standards evaluation, the commencement of negotiations on the future status of Kosovo and the establishment of a democratic and multi-ethnic society in Kosovo are of great significance for the region's overall stability.

We believe that in this way a genuine "voice of the region" has expressed itself very clearly on what it expects with regard to Kosovo. The matter before the Council today obviously had high priority on the agenda of the Romanian chairmanship of the SEECP, and we trust that the same kind of attention will be central to the activities of the current Greek chairmanship as well.

Romania considers that effective mechanisms need to be put in place to counter organized crime and promote sustainable economic growth in Kosovo.

More generally, we believe that there is no solution outside a European and Euro-Atlantic perspective for the region, including for Serbia and Montenegro. There have been encouraging signs of advancement in that direction lately. Opening up European and Euro-Atlantic perspectives to Serbia and Montenegro and Kosovo will facilitate the process and ensure a positive attitude and more willingness to carry out the necessary reforms.

On a particular note, Romania considers that a substantive dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade and between communities in Kosovo — including, especially, on political matters — is essential at this moment. Such dialogue should contribute not only to the advancement of the political process, but also to a better environment of trust and confidence. In this respect Romania welcomes the openness for dialogue expressed recently by the high-level authorities of Serbia and Montenegro and of Serbia. In the same vein, we call on the Kosovo Serb representatives to assume their role in the political life in Kosovo. In fact, we do not envisage an effective and viable solution for Kosovo that is not be based on genuine dialogue and compromise among those concerned.

Yesterday the Council took up, in the frame of an inspired Danish initiative, the issues of peacebuilding and preventing relapses into conflict. On the topic today, the best peacebuilding offer we see for the Western Balkans is their inclusion in the mainstream European and Euro-Atlantic integration processes. What Romania wishes to see in the Western Balkans is sustainable security and stability, based on democracy, freedom and tolerance. That is a complex challenge that has Kosovo as a nodal point. To achieve it we need commitment, political maturity, dialogue and vision from all involved.

I would like to conclude by asking the Special Representative to give us a few more elements on measures taken in Kosovo to fight organized crime, which is an important challenge for the entire region.

Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil): I wish at the outset to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Søren Jessen-Petersen, for his insightful and comprehensive presentation on the report of the Secretary-General on Kosovo. I avail myself of this opportunity to renew the expression of Brazil's support for the excellent work he is doing at the head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).

As Kosovo approaches a unique, decisive moment, with consequences for the entire Balkan region, we are encouraged by the indications of increased awareness on the part of Kosovo's people and leadership about the effort that lies ahead. Growing commitment by the Provisional Institutions to meet the conditions necessary to start the talks on the final status is a welcome sign of political maturity. The Secretary-General's report and the briefing by the Special Representative highlight that a significant proportion of the Priority Standards Goals have been achieved. This enhances the prospects for launching of the status talks this year.

Fortunately, since the regrettable outbreaks of violence last year, the Provisional Institutions have intensified their efforts to implement the standards. Consistent efforts to improve the situation of minority communities in the province were made, with a view to fulfilling an essential precondition for advancement towards the process to determine Kosovo's status.

The dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade was also somewhat improved. We welcome the resumption of the work of the working groups on missing persons, energy, the return of displaced persons and transport and telecommunications. As to much-needed economic reform, steps made in the privatization process and with respect to economic integration into the region are encouraging. Much remains to be done, though, given the dire economic situation of Kosovo, which has still to deal with an unemployment rate higher than 60 per cent.

In spite of all the positive elements, the temptation to offer an excessively positive assessment of the situation should be avoided. The Secretary-General warns in an unequivocal way that none of the eight standards has so far been entirely fulfilled. The situation of minorities is still a reason for concern, especially regarding freedom of movement and access to justice. Also, refugees and displaced persons still face a desperate predicament, as the slow pace of the returns process is hindering the achievement of the related standard. There is also much to be done regarding the prevalence of the rule of law, the reform of local government and the full enjoyment by all citizens of their fundamental rights.

Responsibility for the process must not be put entirely on the Kosovo Government's shoulders. Minorities, especially the Serb minority, have the fundamental obligation of engaging fully in the quest for solutions by taking advantage of all opportunities to participate in Kosovo's institutions. The Serbs must be encouraged by Belgrade to do so.

The Security Council must remain committed to resolution 1244 (1999) and to the "standards before status" policy, under which definitive progress in standards implementation is a precondition for the determination of final status.

We believe that the intention of the Secretary-General to appoint a Special Envoy to lead the assessment process, starting this year, will indicate the road ahead. By carrying on consultations with the parties and the international community, the Special Envoy will be able to make an independent evaluation of the work done se far. The assessment of the level of attainment of the standards will help determine whether the conditions for final status talks have been created.

More than ever before, any freezing of the current situation in Kosovo would lead to further deterioration of already difficult political, social and economic conditions. The review process, therefore, should be carried out with great seriousness. Above all, its conclusions and results must not be anticipated or taken for granted. None of the parties should be allowed to unduly influence the results of the review with threats of any kind, and the Council must make it clear that the resurgence of violence will not be rewarded.

The persistent efforts to achieve dialogue and understanding between the parties through the mediation carried out by the Contact Group have been instrumental in pushing the whole process forward. Peace in Kosovo should ultimately rely on winning the hearts of the people. Healing the wounds of the past and rebuilding bridges between the various communities will create an environment more favourable to tolerance. All parties must be ready to work towards a compromise capable of turning Kosovo from a source of instability into a model of peaceful inter-ethnic coexistence.

Mr. Vassilakis (Greece): We thank the Secretary-General for his report on the situation in Kosovo (S/2005/335). We also thank his Special Representative, Mr. Jessen-Petersen, for his informative and, I have to say, candid briefing. I wish to welcome Mr. Covic, President of the Coordination Centre of Serbia and Montenegro and of the Republic of Serbia for Kosovo and Metohija, to our meeting today.

Greece associates itself fully with the statement to be delivered by the representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union.

I am sure that all members know what the ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus said: "*Ta panta rhei* — Everything in life is in flux". In recent years, we have often heard the expression "road map". Reading the report of the Secretary-General (S/2005/335), we believe that both expressions could apply to recent developments in Kosovo. In other words, since our last meeting on this item, in February (see S/PV.5130), things have been moving. Overall, the picture remains mixed: some more progress, but still some delays; headway being made, but serious lags in some areas. As the Secretary-General points out in his report, none of the standards has been entirely fulfilled and serious deficiencies remain in key areas. A great deal of work lies ahead of us. Let us go into this process with our eyes wide open.

Decentralization, to a large extent, holds the key to success in restoring confidence and promoting returns. And yet it has been allowed to slow almost to a halt. An easy excuse can be offered: it does not feature formally as one of the eight standards to be implemented. Yet we all know — and the Secretary-General's report makes it clear — that it is a key measure in building the new Kosovo. It remains so regardless of the standards, a number of which would actually be facilitated by its completion. In that respect, we welcome the participation for the first time of Kosovo Serbs in the relevant working group.

On the important front of returns, no significant progress has been reported. There can be no alternative to success in this area. Evidently, efforts have to be strengthened. Also, let us repeat once more that Kosovo Serbs need to re-engage in full dialogue on all levels with the Provisional Institutions; they have to demonstrate their commitment to integrating into Kosovo society.

According to the report, improvement has been achieved in freedom of movement as well as in the security situation. But the integrated transport system has yet to become a reality; the zero-tolerance policy for acts that threaten this freedom needs to be implemented urgently and fully.

We cannot emphasize enough the importance of the signing of the memorandum of understanding on the reconstruction of Serbian Orthodox religious sites damaged during the May 2004 riots. That constitutes an encouraging sign of public outreach by Kosovo's leaders to the Kosovo Serbs.

Some good steps have also been taken in the direction of economic reconstruction. Progress in the privatization process is long overdue but is nevertheless very welcome. Let us hope that the pace of recovery will increase as the necessary structural reforms are being completed.

The regional perspective should be fully exploited. In that respect, the goals of economic cooperation within the South-East European Cooperation Process and the question of how these can include Kosovo should be further explored and pursued. Greece, as part of the region and as current Chairman of the South-East European Cooperation Process, is actively engaged in promoting the deepening of cooperation in the region.

The internal political situation in Kosovo remains a real concern. The Kosovar people showed remarkable political maturity when former Prime Minister Haradinaj was indicted and surrendered voluntarily to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former

Yugoslavia. Since then, a new coalition Government has taken over; the transition was smooth and orderly.

Nevertheless, internal bickering and tension have continued, along with incidents of violence, which are a by-product of that kind of atmosphere. If the situation is allowed to deteriorate, this will inevitably influence future developments. The creation of a democratic society in Kosovo is a fundamental prerequisite for the future stability of the whole region. That cannot be overlooked.

Bearing in mind the progress in all aspects of the strategy proposed in November 2004 and the efforts undertaken by the Provisional Institutions, the Secretary-General has concluded that a comprehensive review should be initiated this summer. The review is to be conducted in accordance with resolution 1244 (1999) and the relevant presidential statements of the Security Council. On balance — a very fine balance — we share the Secretary-General's view that we could move on to the launch of the comprehensive review.

This new stage in the process will not, however, mean that the standards implementation goal has been achieved. On the contrary, for the Provisional Institutions it should mean shifting into a higher gear. The international community's expectations will not remain at their current level but will increase as time goes by; the deliverables from Pristina should match that.

The resumption of dialogue on practical matters between Belgrade and Pristina points the way to the future. We expect that such dialogue will resume soon at all levels. The invitations by both President Tadic and Prime Minister Kostunica to, respectively, President Rugova and Prime Minister Kosumi, are a welcome initiative and deserve our full support. Just as we urge Belgrade to engage in dialogue with the provisional authorities, so we must now make clear to the Provisional Institutions that there can be no avoiding a direct dialogue with Belgrade.

Greece has undertaken a series of diplomatic initiatives aimed at promoting dialogue among the parties based on the principle of the peaceful resolution of disputes through negotiated settlement. In this context, the Prime Minister of Greece recently visited the region, including Belgrade and Pristina.

It is our hope that Kosovo will one day become an equal participant in the region's stability and prosperity — an integral part of the enlarged European family. Therefore, no less than complete implementation of all the goals in the standards plan is a prerequisite.

Mr. Mercado (Philippines): I join other delegations in welcoming you, Sir, to the Chair. I should also like to welcome the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Ambassador Søren Jessen-Petersen, and to thank him for introducing the report of the Secretary-General, as well as for his update on the situation in Kosovo. We also welcome the President of the Coordination Centre of Kosovo and Metohija, Mr. Nebojsa Covic.

The Philippines is encouraged by the Secretary-General's assessment that much progress has been made in efforts to promote multi-ethnicity in Kosovo, and we hope that that momentum will pave the way for the start of discussions of its final status sooner, rather than later. We are pleased to note the progress achieved in the implementation of such standards as functioning democratic institutions, freedom of movement, sustainable returns and minority rights. We are also heartened by the determination exhibited by Kosovo's leaders to pursue the implementation of these and other standards.

The Philippines welcomes the resumption of direct dialogue on practical matters between Belgrade and Pristina after a lull of more than 12 months and the expressed willingness of Belgrade to engage in that important process. We look forward to the planned meetings between President Tadic and President Rugova and Prime Minister Kostunica and Prime Minister Kosumi, and hope that those high-level interactions will contribute constructively to the process.

The Philippines, however, shares the assessment of the Secretary-General and the representative of Serbia that much more needs to be done in implementation of the standards. While such efforts may not be enough to lead to the immediate resolution of Kosovo's final status, we are confident that the necessary political will can be mustered in the coming days and weeks to catapult the process in the right direction.

Kosovo is the last piece of the Balkan jigsaw puzzle, and it is of the utmost importance that all actors engage constructively so as to put the final piece of the puzzle in place as soon as possible. In this connection, the Philippines throws its full support behind the Secretary-General's proposal to carry out a comprehensive review of the implementation of the standards over the next several weeks. We also welcome the positive outcome of last Monday's Contact Group meeting in London, which endorsed the comprehensive review proposed by the Secretary-General. However, the international community must also make it clear that the comprehensive review was proposed on the premise that Kosovo's leaders would continue to make progress in the implementation of the standards. Discussion of Kosovo's final status will therefore be dependent on the outcome of the review.

Kosovo's leaders hold the key to the future. If they want to open the door to final status, they will have to make significant strides in implementation of the standards in the weeks and months to come. They need to collectively demonstrate a genuine and concrete commitment to create a society where all communities can coexist peacefully and in which the rights of members of all of Kosovo's minority groups are respected, safeguarded and guaranteed. The Provisional Institutions must exert greater efforts to convince Kosovo Serbs to participate in the process. Meanwhile, Belgrade must also do its share in moving the process forward.

Kosovo cannot allow its past to rule its present and its future. In his report to the Security Council (S/2005/335), the Secretary-General takes note of the principles laid down by the Contact Group for a solution to Kosovo's final status, which exclude the partition of Kosovo, its union with any country or part of any country, and its return to the situation before March 1999. As the time to decide Kosovo's fate draws nearer, my delegation believes that the Council should start to consider its exit strategy for the province. Kosovo's future is well within sight, but it is up to Kosovo's leaders and its people to determine how and when they will get there. We in the international community should continue to encourage them and show them the way.

Lastly, allow me to again express my delegation's support for the earlier recommendation that the Security Council send a mission to Kosovo either before, during or after the comprehensive review. It is important that the members of the Council have a firm grasp of the situation on the ground, if and when Kosovo's final status is taken up.

Mr. Manongi (United Republic of Tanzania): We join previous speakers in welcoming the report of the Secretary-General and in commending the Special Representative, Mr. Jessen-Petersen, for his briefing. We, too, welcome the presence of the Minister of Serbia and Montenegro here this morning.

We are encouraged by key achievements in the eight standards set for Kosovo, and call upon the Government and all other actors to strive to achieve the other priority goals as set out in the technical assessment report.

We, too, commend the calm reaction by the people of Kosovo following the recent indictment of former Prime Minister Haradinaj. We are relieved that what had been feared did not come to pass. We see their response as an illustration of growing political maturity in Kosovo. However, we are concerned at reports that tension between governing and opposition parties has intensified. We urge politicians and rival political parties in Kosovo to cooperate in consolidating progress towards unity and final status for Kosovo.

We note that efforts to reform local government have faced delays. In our view, such negative developments only work to undermine the evolution of important institutions that are critical for genuine self-government. Such delays should not be tolerated by the parties in Kosovo or by anyone else, for they can only engender instability. We know this, for it is all too familiar in areas of conflict in our own region. Local government reform programmes must not await final status negotiations. Delay only weakens the political process. However, we have heard with relief from the Special Representative this morning of specific measures now being undertaken to avert such delays. We welcome this renewed commitment.

We also welcome the direct dialogue established between Belgrade and Pristina on practical matters. This is an important step towards normalization of relations between the two sides. The signing of the memorandum of understanding to reconstruct Serbian Orthodox religious sites damaged in March 2004 is yet another positive element. It is in this spirit that we support the effort of the Special Representative to arrange a meeting between President Tadic of the Republic of Serbia and President Rugova.

We are encouraged by reported improvements in the freedom of movement and in the promotion of the return of displaced persons, and we urge that a more conducive atmosphere be put in place to allow more returns.

We are also encouraged by the steps taken to establish a framework for Kosovo's economic development and its economic integration in the region as a means of addressing Kosovo's difficult economic situation and to assist in generating employment.

We are too conscious that Mr. Jessen-Petersen has a tough job and is working under difficult circumstances. We take this opportunity to commend him and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo for what we believe is the good work they are doing in Kosovo. We also commend the European Union and other financial institutions for their financial support, which will enable Kosovo to become a fully functioning economy and a democracy.

Mr. Holliday (United States of America): I would like to welcome back Special Representative Jessen-Petersen to the Council and thank him for his excellent briefing. I would also like to thank Mr. Covic for joining us here today and for his statement.

We have reached an important milestone in Kosovo. After six years of working with the people of Kosovo to establish a stable, multi-ethnic society, the time has come to step back and assess their progress.

We welcome the Secretary-General's decision to initiate a comprehensive review this summer of Kosovo's progress in implementing the United Nations-endorsed standards, and his intention to appoint a special envoy to carry out that review. The review will cover the benchmarks that lay out the path to a multi-ethnic, democratic and prosperous society. It will provide the basis to judge whether there has been sufficient progress to justify the start of a political process to determine Kosovo's final status, which has remained undetermined during the last six years. The United States believes that while Kosovo is on the right track, it still must make a major effort prior to the comprehensive review to implement the standards.

Nevertheless, we should not take a positive outcome of the review as a foregone conclusion, nor should we assume that the subsequent launch of a final status process will be automatic. Both will depend on the outcome of the review, and that outcome is in the hands of Kosovo's leaders, who should continue their progress in implementing the standards.

Progress is needed on all the standards, but particular emphasis should be placed on standards affecting the multi-ethnic character of Kosovo. The primary test of whether Kosovo has overcome the tragic problems of the past and matured sufficiently to allow the start of a final status process will be its treatment of its minority communities. Effective reform of local government, or decentralization, will be a key test in this regard. The early launch of the already announced pilot projects would help show the Provisional Institutions' commitment to making progress in an area of real concern to Kosovo's minorities and would further the prospects for a positive review.

With the comprehensive review imminent and the prospect of final status talks approaching, we also look to Serbia and Montenegro to engage constructively. We welcome the preliminary signs that it is doing so. Belgrade's decision to encourage Kosovo Serbs to participate in the decentralization working groups is a welcome step, as is the resumption of direct dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina on other vital issues, such as energy, missing persons and transport.

In other areas, however, Belgrade continues to discourage Kosovo Serbs from returning to their seats in the Assembly and to their positions in Kosovo's institutions and political life. This course is counter-productive to the interests of Serbs in Kosovo. We urge the Government in Belgrade to actively encourage Kosovo Serbs to participate fully in all of Kosovo's political institutions and working groups. Participation is the most effective means for Kosovo's Serbs to advance their interests in Kosovo.

The comprehensive review represents an opportunity not only to address Kosovo's future status soon; it is also an opportunity for Serbia and Montenegro to reclaim its rightful place in European and Euro-Atlantic institutions. We hope Serbia and Montenegro will seize this opening by engaging constructively in Kosovo, maintaining a constructive regional role and fulfilling its commitments to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

Finally, as we set out to review Kosovo's progress, it is appropriate that the United Nations similarly review its mission in Kosovo to determine whether it is properly organized and sized to meet the current challenges. The mission of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) is to ultimately work itself out of a job, and as progress is made in transferring responsibilities to Kosovo's Provisional Institutions, the size of the UNMIK presence should be adjusted accordingly.

Again, we would like to salute and thank the Special Representative for all of his hard work over the last several months.

Thank you, Mr. Minister. I did not get a chance to welcome you, but we are very pleased that you are here.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry (United Kingdom): Mr. President, I am particularly pleased to welcome you. I am grateful to the Secretary-General for his report and to the Special Representative for his briefing, for his outstanding and, I think, impartial leadership of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and for the integrity that he brings to his work. It is good to welcome Mr. Covic back, and I thank him for his intervention.

The United Kingdom associates itself with the European Union statement to be delivered subsequently by the representative of Luxembourg.

The United Kingdom shares the Secretary-General's assessment that progress in implementing the standards for Kosovo has continued since his last report, although it is clear that further and continuing progress will be required. Kosovo's institutions reacted quickly and calmly in electing a new Government after the indictment by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) of former Prime Minister Haradinaj. The Belgrade Government's calls for calm following that indictment also helped. That voluntary resignation and surrender to the Tribunal is an example of cooperation with the ICTY, which others should certainly follow.

I have four points on priorities for the coming months.

First, the United Kingdom welcomes the Secretary-General's recommendations to begin this summer a comprehensive review of Kosovo's progress. We look forward to the early appointment of a special envoy to conduct that review. The outcome of the comprehensive review is not predetermined. Demonstrable progress in the standards implementation process must continue up to, during and beyond the review. It remains up to the Provisional Institutions and all of Kosovo's communities, with UNMIK's help, to make progress on standards if the review is to decide that it is possible to move to the next stage and to start discussing Kosovo's future status, as provided for in Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

However, standards are much more than just a means to future status discussions. They represent fundamental issues which will be decisive for the future of Kosovo and its people, irrespective of issues of status.

Secondly, decentralization, while not formally one of the standards, is a key measure of progress and an important element in reassuring minorities. It is therefore disappointing that there has been little progress on the Government's five decentralization pilot projects since the last time the Council discussed Kosovo, in February. As the Contact Group made clear to Prime Minister Kosumi on 25 May, progress on those pilot projects before and during the comprehensive review will be a factor in determining the outcome of that review.

Thirdly, Kosovo Serbs need to be allowed to play a full part in the political life of Kosovo. I did not say that Kosovo Serbs should play a full part in the life of Kosovo. That, I hope, is obvious. I said they should be allowed to play a full part.

The United Kingdom welcomes the resumption of the direct dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina on energy, missing persons and transport. Kosovo Serb participation this week in the decentralization working groups is also encouraging. In our view, the authorities in Belgrade should now be actively encouraging Kosovo Serbs to take their rightful place in Kosovo's Government institutions. The only way for Kosovo Serb interests to be fully reflected and addressed now and in the future is through the full engagement of Kosovo Serbs in Kosovo's political life.

I like what the Special Representative said when he noted that the fault was not in Kosovo but that the victims were. I also listened to and heard the specific points made by Mr. Covic. But it struck me that the best way to address shortcomings is not across this Chamber. Instead, the Serb interest would be better pursued through constructive engagement by Belgrade and if Belgrade encouraged and empowered the Serbs in Kosovo to take their full part in the different processes within Kosovo.

Fourthly, the United Kingdom fully supports the Special Representative's emphasis on the importance of restructuring the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). Ambassador Kai Eide first brought this to the Council's attention in his report of August 2004 (S/2004/932, annex I, enclosure), and we look forward to action beginning on that soon.

In conclusion, the Secretary-General's report (S/2005/335) and the Special Representative's technical assessment contained in its annex I give cause for qualified optimism. But there can be no room for complacency; there is much more hard work ahead. But Mr. Covic's perception of, for example, freedom of movement for minorities in Kosovo does not seem to us to be borne out by the situation on the ground as reflected by the empirical data in the technical assessment annexed to the Secretary-General's report — an assessment which I did not consider actually to have been "embellished". I use that word because Mr. Covic used it I think, three times. We do not consider it to have been embellished. The trend remains positive, and the Provisional Institutions should continue to work hard on making the implementation of standards of tangible benefit to all Kosovars.

When final status discussions begin, it is clear that an independent Kosovo is one option to be considered. But it is equally clear that Kosovo's final status, whatever it is to be, must be negotiated, must be fair to the interests of all communities in Kosovo and must promote regional stability and multi-ethnicity.

For its part, the United Kingdom, in the Contact Group, in the Council, in the European Union and in the region, will continue to work to build a stable, sustainable European future for Kosovo and for the region as a whole, a future in which we very much hope that Serbia and Montenegro too will assume its rightful place within the European family.

Mr. Kitaoka (Japan): I would like to thank you, Mr. Minister, for convening and presiding over today's public meeting. I also wish to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Søren Jessen-Petersen, for his comprehensive briefing. We highly commend Mr. Jessen-Petersen and the staff of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) for their proactive and tireless efforts for the future of Kosovo.

Japan recognizes the importance of the "standards before status" policy, endorsed by the Security Council in its resolution 1244 (1999), and believes that progress in the Kosovo Standards Implementation Plan by the parties, with support from the international community, is essential. The commencement of the comprehensive review will be a significant milestone for the "standards before status" policy.

The Government of Japan highly appreciates the clear commitment and tangible efforts to date on the part of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government for the achievement of the standards, which have included cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the resumption of direct dialogue with Belgrade at the working group level. We welcome recent proposals to hold high-level meetings between Pristina and Belgrade as a step forward and hope that they will contribute to confidence-building between the two parties.

Notwithstanding those indications of good faith, my Government does not believe that any of the standards has been sufficiently fulfilled. Instances of harassment of minorities continue to be reported, and a Kosovo Force (KFOR) escort is still required for the movement of those minorities in some areas. The fragile security situation, combined with high unemployment, has kept the rate of returns of internally displaced persons low. Much remains to be done, especially with regard to the protection of minorities. We welcome the adoption of the Reform of Local Government Working Programme 2005, and call upon all parties to make further efforts for the implementation of that essential project.

We believe that the comprehensive review will foster further progress in achieving the standards by the parties and will crystallise the progress made to date with regard to each standard. From that point of view, we consider it appropriate to begin the review at this time, and we would like to express our support for the Secretary-General's recommendation that a comprehensive review should be initiated this summer. At the same time, Japan would like to underscore that significant progress on all standards, including in addressing the aforementioned problems, must be recognized in the comprehensive review in order for the review to result in a positive evaluation and for the status talks to begin.

Japan has been providing its support to the Kosovo Standards Implementation Plan through assistance for the independent media and schools for ethnic minorities, among other areas. Our total contribution to Kosovo to date in the fields of reconstruction, humanitarian assistance, democratization and human resources development amounts to approximately $188 million. Projects focusing on medical care, education and human resources development will continue to be undertaken in a proactive manner. Japan intends to continue to play an energetic role in the efforts to shape the future of Kosovo and to contribute to the consolidation of peace and economic development in South-Eastern Europe.

Mr. Babadoudou (Benin) (*spoke in French*): Mr. Minister, my delegation wishes to welcome your presence among us this morning; it lends a particular prestige to this Council meeting devoted to the final conflict ravaging the heart of Europe.

My delegation associates itself with preceding speakers in expressing its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report (S/2005/335). At the same time, we warmly congratulate Mr. Søren Jessen-Petersen on his briefing.

There are two basic elements of the briefing to which we should like to refer. First is the noteworthy improvement in the political climate due to the efforts of all parties fully to implement the eight standards, although none of the standards has been entirely met; second is the need for the international community to focus its efforts on the implementation of those standards as a prerequisite for determining the future status of Kosovo.

In that framework, my delegation urges the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government to continue to display their will to lead the transition process to success by giving concrete content to the standards so as to establish a climate of mutual confidence, which can reduce tension and violence, and the conditions for a democratic, multi-ethnic and economically viable Kosovo.

We welcome the expressed readiness of the Serb and Kosovar authorities to meet at the highest levels. Such high-level dialogue, we believe, can help to achieve progress in the implementation of the standards. In particular, it will be necessary to continue to refine the working methods of Parliament, to pursue decentralization, to take measures to facilitate freedom of movement and the resettlement of displaced persons, and to implement the memorandum of understanding on the reconstruction of destroyed Serbian religious sites. We also believe that the establishment of a working framework for the economic development of Kosovo is a priority that should be pursued.

On the basis of all those considerations, my delegation wishes to express its support for the Secretary-General's recommendation that a special envoy be appointed to conduct a field assessment this summer of the implementation of the standards and to shed light on future steps.

The international community must continue to focus its attention on the situation in Kosovo and, in particular, to support the people of Kosovo and their political leaders, who have the primary responsibility for the future of the province. In that context, all means must be applied to allow the participation of the Kosovo Serbs in the process. We also believe that the press could make a major contribution to the climate by raising awareness in that respect.

We hope that the final status of the province can be determined as soon as possible so that the progress achieved on the long march towards normalization can be consolidated.

Mr. Denisov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I welcome you, Sir, as President of the Security Council at today's meeting.

Our delegation is grateful to the Secretary-General for his report on the activities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and to the head of the Mission, Mr. Jessen-Petersen, for his comprehensive briefing on the situation in the province. We welcome and support the participation in today's meeting of the President of the Coordination Centre of Serbia and Montenegro and of the Republic of Serbia for Kosovo and Metohija, Mr. Nebojsa Covic.

Russia has carefully considered the Secretary-General's report. We endorse his primary conclusions and tenets and agree with his conclusion that, in the area of standards implementation, a good deal of work remains to be done. Our primary concern in that regard is the fact that, according to the report, not one of the eight primary standards has yet been fully implemented. We are especially distressed by the extremely low number of refugee returns, which are the most useful indicator for assessing the situation in the province. There are also considerable shortcomings in the efforts to reform local institutions of self-government in Kosovo. At the same time, progress in the area of decentralization offers the opportunity to assess the extent to which the authorities have taken into account the legitimate interests of minorities.

Like the Secretary-General, we underscore that the genuine implementation of standards — aimed primarily at ensuring the rights, freedoms and security of ethnic minorities — is not only a test of the readiness to take the political process to the next phase of the settlement, but is above all a criterion of the maturity of the province's government structures and their capacity to establish a truly democratic and multi-ethnic society in Kosovo. On that basis, we are convinced that the process of standards implementation should be analysed on the basis not of emerging trends that may be genuinely positive in themselves, but of concrete results. In that context, however, it would still be premature to talk about substantive progress having been made.

At this critical juncture of the settlement in Kosovo, the task of elaborating a coordinated international strategy is of fundamental importance. We are pleased that the outcomes of the meeting of the Balkans Contact Group in London demonstrated the clear intentions of its participants to work together to achieve a stable Kosovo settlement. One such outcome was the agreement of all parties to launch a review process, although the comprehensive review is not an end in itself. We are convinced that its implementation must be consistent with highly specific requirements; above all, it must be thorough and protracted so that the future special envoy dispatched by the Secretary-General to conduct the review will have a genuine opportunity to draw an objective picture of the development of the situation in Kosovo and to prepare a comprehensive policy report for the Security Council. It would also be appropriate for the head of UNMIK to continue to issue technical reports.

The results of the policy review cannot and should not be biased. The process of review must be carried out in all phases of its implementation with the oversight of the Security Council and culminate in a presidential statement. It is crucial that the Contact Group send consolidated signals to the government institutions in Pristina and Belgrade. Belgrade must remain a full participant in the Kosovo process. I reiterate that such consolidated signals must be sent to both parties.

Unfortunately, a number of participants in today's meeting have addressed their criticism primarily to Belgrade. We are certain that the primary effort to ensure the implementation of standards must be taken by the Albanian leadership of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government. We share the view that the involvement of Kosovo Serbs in those bodies is perfectly expedient. In that regard, direct contacts between Belgrade and Pristina are vitally important. We welcome the recent initiatives of the Serbian side in that respect.

We reaffirm our fundamental position that resolution 1244 (1999) is the sole political platform for achieving a settlement in Kosovo. The lasting stability of the province will be possible only if an agreed international strategy is elaborated, with the Security Council playing a lead role.

For our part, we are prepared to cooperate closely with the Secretary-General; his Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, Mr. Jessen-Petersen; the future Special Envoy who will conduct the review; and our partners in the Contact Group, in the common interest of consolidating stability and security for all of the inhabitants of the province.

Mr. Zhang Yishan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Mr. President, let me at the outset welcome the fact that you are personally presiding over today's meeting. I should like to thank the Secretary-General for his report and Mr. Jessen-Petersen for his briefing, and to thank Mr. Covic for his introduction.

The situation in Kosovo is now at an important stage with respect to its future as well as the stability of the Balkan region. We have always believed that a comprehensive and proper settlement of the question of Kosovo requires the full implementation of the various standards, in accordance with resolution 1244 (1999).

Meanwhile, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Serbia and Montenegro must be respected. According to the Secretary-General's report, the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo

(UNMIK) and the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government have taken some positive measures and have achieved some positive results in the implementation of standards in certain areas.

However, there has been little progress in the areas of the return of refugees and freedom of movement of minorities. Progress has also been slow in dealing with unemployment, economic development and raising the living standards of minorities. We hope that all ethnic groups in Kosovo will endeavour to enhance mutual trust and promote reconciliation so as to lay a good foundation for the establishment of a society characterized by peaceful coexistence.

We welcome the willingness of the leaders of Serbia and Montenegro to engage in direct dialogue with the Kosovo authorities, as this will be conducive to the final settlement of the question of Kosovo. We hope that dialogue will resume as soon as possible and lead to positive developments in the situation.

This year is a very crucial one for Kosovo, as the Security Council will be considering the implementation of the standards. Work on implementation of the standards must therefore continue, and all parties should promote the implementation process in a spirit of sincerity and practicality. Only substantive results in the areas of the economy, security, ethnic reconciliation and the establishment of a society based on multi-ethnic, peaceful coexistence can lead to the definitive settlement of the question of Kosovo.

Mr. García Moritán (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to express our thanks to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo, Mr. Soren Jessen-Petersen, for the comprehensive briefing that he has just provided on the activities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and on the events that have occurred there in the months of February, March and April. Likewise, I should like to thank Mr. Nebojsa Covic for his statement.

I should like to associate myself with the gratitude expressed in the report to the men and women of UNMIK for their unswerving dedication and commitment to the values and objectives of the Organization in the daily conduct of their tasks. I wish to underscore the fact that my country is the eighth largest troop contributor to the police component of the Mission.

In connection with the issues raised by Mr. Jessen-Petersen, we are pleased to note the efforts made by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government with a view to the full implementation of the standards for Kosovo, as we are convinced that sustained progress in the implementation of those standards is a basic prerequisite for progress to be made in the process that will determine the future status of Kosovo. Nonetheless, it is disturbing to know that acts of non-compliance persist and that none of the standards has yet been entirely implemented.

In that regard, it is fitting to recall that the standards were prepared in order specifically to define the final status of Kosovo in the framework of the "standards before status" policy, which was designed for Kosovo and endorsed by the Council in implementation of resolution 1244 (1999). That is why we consider it essential that those who compose and represent the Provisional Institutions agree to accept and implement those standards, which are understood as goals to be achieved and as a sign of the will of those who live in Kosovo to develop a multi-ethnic, democratic and sustainable society.

Equally of concern is the information regarding the increase in tension between the Government parties and the opposition in the framework of questions that are decisive to the future of Kosovo, as well as the persistence of elements that are prepared to resort to violence. It is undeniable that a possible escalation of violence and an increase in political strife could destabilize the situation and interrupt the process that is necessary to determine the future status of Kosovo.

In that regard, we endorse the Secretary-General's statement in his report that progress depends on a constructive, democratic dynamic between the Government and the opposition. There is a need for a genuine commitment and for the responsible discharge of their respective functions as well as a complete rejection of violence in order to ensure that work is carried out jointly that will yield concrete results for the benefit of the population.

Furthermore, we welcome the progress that has been made in the direct dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade on practical questions, together with the declared will on the part of Belgrade's political leaders to participate in this process. It is also encouraging to see that there is greater freedom of movement and that the Kosovo Serbs are less dependent on the escorts that accompany them when they travel in majority areas.

In that regard, Argentina agrees with the Secretary-General that mutual trust among the communities of Kosovo is the foundation of lasting security. This means mainly that the Kosovo Albanians and their leaders must step up their efforts to reach out to the Kosovo Serbs, while the latter must show their concrete will to integrate into Kosovo society.

Argentina affirms that there can be no prosperous and peaceful future for Kosovo without full respect for the diversity of its people. A lasting solution to the question of Kosovo must be reached on the basis of full respect for the principle of territorial integrity.

In that framework, we believe that it is a matter of priority to emphasize the importance of respect for human rights — including the rights of refugees and of displaced persons — and international humanitarian law as well as respect for the rights of minorities.

The political process must be propelled by the achievement of real progress in the implementation of the eight standards, an achievement which is essential to the sustainability of any process related to the future status of Kosovo. In that regard, we support the conducting of a comprehensive review under the terms of resolution 1244 (1999) in order to evaluate the current situation and conditions with a view to the adoption of measures in accordance with the recommendations of the Secretary-General.

We believe that the support given by the international community to those who have responsibilities in the process — that is, the population of Kosovo and their representatives in the Provisional Institutions — will help the process move towards ensuring the sustainability of a potential political agreement.

Mr. El Hadj Ali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): My delegation is delighted to have you here among us, Mr. Minister. I would like to thank Mr. Søren Jessen-Petersen for his dynamic work at the head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), for the initiatives that he has taken, in particular regarding the organization of a forum of Kosovo political leaders, and for his fine introduction of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2005/335) on the situation in Kosovo. I also welcome Mr. Nebojsa Covic, President of the Coordination C[illegible] of Serbia and Montenegro and of the Republic of Serbia for Kosovo.

Today's debate has enabled us to assess the progress made in the process of stabilization and normalization of the overall situation in Kosovo. Significant progress has been made in a variety of fields, notably as regards the implementation of reforms and the strengthening of local institutions. In that connection, we welcome the actions undertaken by the coalition Government and the local authorities in the framework of the process of détente and of improvement in the socio-economic situation of the inhabitants of Kosovo.

We have noted with interest the encouraging results regarding freedom of movement and the return of displaced populations. To be sure, progress in this area remains limited, but its impact is significant in confidence-building and in promoting reconciliation among Kosovans. It is also of utmost importance to recall the need for all Kosovans both to support the democratic process and to participate in the management of local institutions. In that regard, we believe that the resumption of dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina constitutes a positive step in developing closer links among Kosovans and in improving relations between the parties concerned.

The noteworthy progress made in the overall situation in Kosovo deserves the full attention and support of all. Nonetheless, it remains insufficient vis-à-vis the standards established by the international community. The international community must therefore create the conditions for the comprehensive implementation and success of those standards, and proceed, as soon as possible, to a review of the basic question of Kosovo's final status. In that regard, we support the idea of the Secretary-General to appoint a Special Envoy.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark.

Like others, I should like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2005/335) and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Mr. Søren Jessen-Petersen, for his briefing, which I particularly appreciated for its fine balance, discerning detail and forward-looking thrust.

I have full respect and admiration for the impressive results achieved by Mr. Jessen-Petersen and his staff during his tenure. I also commend the Kosovo Force (KFOR), the UNMIK police and the Kosovo Police Service for having shown great skill and professionalism in maintaining a secure and stable environment through a challenging period. Their continued presence and professionalism will be needed for some time to come.

I would also like to thank Mr. Covic for his statement and for his presence here today.

The representative of Luxembourg will shortly make a statement on behalf of the European Union, and Denmark fully associates itself with that statement.

I should like to tell members that last week I visited Belgrade and Pristina and had the opportunity to discuss the situation in Kosovo in general, and, specifically, standards implementation, with the central players on the ground. I made the point, which has also been made so clearly by most speakers today, that we are not there yet. Standards implementation must not slow down and will have to continue for a long time yet. In a number of key areas, not least with regard to decentralization, returns and the direct dialogue with Belgrade, much more needs to be done, and quickly.

We also need to see progress with regard to Kosovo Serb participation in the political process. Belgrade should soon come forward with a clear signal in that regard. Standards implementation and the commitment to securing a multi-ethnic, democratic Kosovo will also be a long-term requirement for Kosovo's integration into the European Union.

In general, however, we have seen tangible progress in the reporting period. More important, we have seen a clear demonstration of political will and capacity to maintain momentum in the continued standards process. We acknowledge that major shortcomings still exist which need to be addressed. But in the light of the progress, the assessment of the Danish Government is that it is now possible and recommendable to move on to the next phase, to a comprehensive review this summer, in accordance with resolution 1244 (1999) and relevant presidential statements of the Security Council.

I am happy to see the Secretary-General reach the same conclusion in his report. I fully share his analysis that we have seen intensified efforts to implement standards, which reflect the recognizable political maturity and commitment of the Kosovo leaders. I urge the Secretary-General to move ahead now as he suggests. My Government will do its utmost to support him and the Special Envoy he will name in their efforts in this next and crucial phase.

We hope, and we are optimistic, that the comprehensive review will lead to a decision to start a negotiation process in the autumn that will determine Kosovo's final status. It should be stated clearly that there is no automaticity for the start of such talks. The outcome of the review will be decisive in that regard. But we also feel strongly that the time has come to move on. Kosovo's unresolved status is in nobody's interest. It creates political insecurity, discourages returns, feeds extremist designs, scares off foreign direct investment and maintains the inhabitants of Kosovo, irrespective of ethnicity, in the grip of massive unemployment and economic misery. It is simply not sustainable.

I share the view expressed by many today that there will be no going back to the status quo ante. We should not prejudge the outcome of the status talks, but obviously we will not see a return to the pre-March 1999 situation. Just as a reintegration of Kosovo into Serbia or a territorial division of Kosovo can be excluded, so can a union of Kosovo with another country, or a solution dictated unilaterally by one of the parties.

One of the most dreadful decades of Balkan history ended five years ago. We should now put it behind us. The time has come to start an inclusive and regionally-based process with a view to solving one of the last outstanding issues following from the violent conflicts of the former Yugoslavia. Once an agreement on Kosovo's final status has been found, we can look forward to a more peaceful and prosperous future that the peoples of South-Eastern Europe deserve. Then we can look towards close regional cooperation between former foes and towards the common integration of these truly European countries into the Euro-Atlantic institutions where they so rightfully belong.

I urge the Secretary-General to start our journey down that road now and to take the first step today.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Luxembourg, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Hoscheit (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. the acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania, the candidate countries Turkey and Croatia and the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

Let me begin by thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Mr. Søren Jessen-Petersen, for his briefing and for his work, and by reiterating the European Union's full support for his work.

Since the Secretary-General and the Special Representative last reported to the Council on the situation in Kosovo in February, significant progress has been achieved. Most important, we note that the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government have shown an encouraging and demonstrable level of commitment to move forward in the implementation of the standards.

The security situation during the period under review was generally calm. We commend the political leaders for their stance and for the mature manner in which they handled the announcement by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia of the indictment of the former Prime Minister, as well as for the fairly smooth process leading to the appointment of a new Prime Minister. For the European Union, cooperation with the Tribunal has always been, and remains, a key issue in Kosovo and in the region as a whole, as it has direct impact on progress towards its European ambitions.

The European Union attaches great importance to the establishment of a direct and sustained high-level dialogue among all Kosovo communities, as well as between Belgrade and Pristina. It notes with interest that meetings between the respective Presidents and Prime Ministers might take place soon. It furthermore calls upon all communities to actively participate in the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government and in all ongoing processes. In that context, the European Union welcomes the participation this week, for the first time, of Kosovo Serb representatives at the meeting of the working group on decentralization, and it calls upon Belgrade to encourage further Kosovo Serb participation in the political life of Kosovo.

The European Union shares the Secretary-General's assessment that, given the commitment of the Provisional Institutions and the progress being achieved in what were identified as priority areas, and assuming that such progress will continue uninterrupted, the comprehensive review foreseen in the Security Council presidential statement of 12 December 2003 (S/PRST/2003/26) should take place this summer. We therefore support the Secretary-General's intention to appoint a Special Envoy to conduct that review in the near future, and we welcome the openness and broad scope of the review process.

Despite the assessment that sufficient progress has been made to justify the start of an exhaustive evaluation at this point, the European Union recognizes that none of the eight standards has been fully implemented, and that deficiencies remain in key priority areas.

The Provisional Institutions and Kosovo's political leaders should therefore be aware that neither the outcome of the review process nor the initiation of any further steps thereafter is not a foregone conclusion. The implementation of the standards is a long-term endeavour and is expected to continue throughout the evaluation process and beyond.

When I had the opportunity to address the Council on this issue in February (see S/PV.5130), I said that the protection of minority communities, the return of refugees and displaced persons, freedom of movement and decentralization were areas that needed particular attention, given their direct link to our common goal of a democratic and multi-ethnic Kosovo. In his report, the Secretary-General notes some measure of improvement in all of those areas except the central issue of local government reform and, in particular, decentralization, where progress has been lacking.

As the Secretary-General points out in paragraph 9 of his report (S/2005/335),

> "achieving concrete results in the local government reform process will influence prospects for the political process to determine Kosovo's future status".

It is thus essential to move forward rapidly in the implementation of pilot projects, including those in areas where Kosovo Serbs form the majority.

Despite the many justified caveats, the Secretary-General's recommendation to initiate a critical and comprehensive review of standards implementation this summer is a momentous event for the people of Kosovo. That recommendation should be interpreted as both a recognition by the international community of progress already achieved and a powerful incentive to maintain and increase the momentum of ongoing reforms. The European Union will continue to support a democratic and multi-ethnic Kosovo, characterized by the protection that it provides to its minorities, as it endeavours to translate into reality its European aspirations, regardless of its future status.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Ukraine, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine): I would like at the outset to congratulate you, Madam, on the successful and productive Danish presidency of the Security Council this month.

I would also like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Søren Jessen-Petersen, for his informative and, I must say, encouraging briefing, and to welcome the report of the Secretary-General (S/2005/335).

Let me also welcome the participation in today's meeting of the President of the Coordination Centre of Serbia and Montenegro and of the Republic of Serbia for Kosovo and Metohija, Mr. Nebojsa Covic.

More than a year after the tragic events of March 2004, the general situation in Kosovo is now well on track — hopefully, towards substantial progress. In this regard, we commend the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government for their consistent and proactive efforts to implement Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and to bring about positive change in the areas covered by the eight standards. We also commend the tireless and efficient work of Mr. Jessen-Petersen as Head of the Mission, and take this opportunity to assure him of Ukraine's continuing support.

The Secretary-General's report reflects many promising developments on the ground. The international presence has achieved a number of important results in strengthening the foundation for the democratic transformation of Kosovo. However, we cannot but note the uneven progress in the implementation of the standards, primarily those focusing on minority issues, which is reflected in the Secretary-General's report. In this regard, we are particularly concerned about the continuing lack of headway in the areas of minority freedom of movement, sustainable returns and relevant minority representation in governmental structures and in the public sector as a whole. While the security situation has remained stable in recent months, the safety of minorities still needs further improvement. Another serious challenge to the process are the problems of Kosovo's economy, accompanied by high unemployment rates.

It is obvious that ultimate progress in these areas will require further concerted efforts by the international community, Belgrade and the Kosovars. We have seen many commitments on the part of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government with respect to the implementation of the standards; we expect those commitments to be translated into real deeds.

The situation in Kosovo remains fragile and requires a continuous international presence on the ground, particularly during the extremely sensitive period ahead of us. Ukraine, as a major police contributor to UNMIK, is aware of the importance of maintaining an appropriate security level at this stage. In this respect, we would like to draw the Council's attention to the need for donors to fully meet their financial obligations to the police-contributing States in a timely manner. A further failure to do so might limit the capacity of those countries to provide the necessary personnel, thus compromising security in the region.

As an active contributor to the Kosovo settlement, Ukraine reaffirms its commitment to promoting peace and security in the province and to ensuring its further stabilization and recovery.

We are standing now at the threshold of a comprehensive review that will have a crucial impact on the timing of the final status talks.

My country expects that our discussion today will lead to the adoption of a carefully balanced approach that will facilitate the advancement of the goal of building a politically stable, multi-ethnic and prosperous Kosovo, in full conjunction with resolution 1244 (1999).

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

Mr. Maurer (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Madam President, I would first of all like to congratulate you on the skill and commitment with which your country has conducted the presidency of the Security Council during the month of May 2005.

Over the last few years, the United Nations has been strongly committed to preparing the ground for establishing substantial autonomy and self-administration in Kosovo. Although considerable progress has been achieved, there is still much to be done, in particular in the areas of the democratic functioning of institutions, the rule of law and respect for minorities and human rights. We fully share the Secretary-General's analysis on this subject in the report he has just submitted to the Security Council (S/2005/335). We are delighted with the unswerving work of the Special Representative and with the statement he made this morning.

In order to achieve more concrete progress, the international community must act in a more concerted manner and with greater determination to put the basic framework in place. But the Serb and Kosovar leaders too must make greater efforts to assume their full responsibilities. This is crucial now that the assessment of standards is entering a decisive phase.

Since the NATO intervention in 1999, Kosovo has been de facto separated from Serbia and Montenegro, although de jure it remains part of that country. That situation is neither satisfactory nor desirable. Switzerland considers that the time has come to launch, between now and the end of the year, a discussion on the future status of Kosovo. For Switzerland, several parameters should guide our thoughts.

First, it is important to take into account two equally legitimate desires: on the one hand, the demand of the minorities to live in safety, to have the same opportunities for economic development, to have the same access to social services and education and to exercise the right of return; on the other hand, the will of the majority of the population to exercise its right of self-determination.

Secondly, Switzerland welcomes the first steps that have been made towards a dialogue between Serb and Kosovar leaders. A return of Kosovo to Serb sovereignty is neither desirable nor realistic. Nevertheless, the evolution towards formal independence of Kosovo must happen under close international monitoring, as well as through negotiations with the authorities in Belgrade, as this independence cannot be imposed on them.

Thirdly, the question of Kosovo must be addressed from a regional perspective. The commitment of the international community to maintain multi-ethnic States in South Eastern Europe is fundamental. It is the only feasible long-term policy. A division of Kosovo would be contrary to this approach and must be ruled out. What is important is to promote the decentralization of power in order to allow the Serbs of Kosovo to enjoy real opportunities to pursue their development and to take an active part in determining the political future of Kosovo.

Switzerland welcomes the fact that the first steps have been taken to establish a dialogue between the leaders of Serbia and of Kosovo. The readiness to conduct such a discussion at the highest level is a necessary condition to unblock the current situation and to advance the discussion on standards and status.

Switzerland has been closely involved in the region since the outbreak of the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia. It has used considerable resources, backing its efforts with more than one and a half billion Swiss francs since 1995. Switzerland is especially active in Kosovo, at different levels.

My country's contribution is based on its own historical experiences, but also, and above all, it addresses real local needs in the areas of consolidation of local democracy, decentralization and reinforcing the mechanisms for the protection of minorities. Switzerland wishes to make a useful contribution to the efforts of the international community and is ready to play a role as facilitator. It is already active in supporting a dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade, as well as between the various communities, and is ready to pursue this role further.

Even if the status question is resolved in the near future, the prevailing economic conditions and the still poorly developed structures for the rule of law require the continuation of a significant international presence in Kosovo. Switzerland is determined to pursue its commitment side by side with other members of the international community.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Albania.

Mr. Nesho (Albania): Madam President, at the outset, on behalf of my Government, allow me to welcome the Foreign Minister of Denmark, Mr. Per Stig Møller, who has been presiding over the Council at this very important meeting on the future of our region. Let me also express my delegation's appreciation for the realistic, comprehensive and substantive report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) (S/2005/335). We also welcome at this important meeting the presence of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Søren Jessen-Petersen, and we thank him for his comprehensive briefing on the latest developments in Kosovo. On behalf of my Government, I would like to commend and thank Mr. Jessen-Petersen for his leadership and foresight at the head of UNMIK and for his active diplomacy in promoting a fruitful partnership of Kosovo's institutions with the various regional and international stakeholders. Once again, I would like to assure him of Albania's full support.

We commend the Contact Group on Kosovo for its active role, strongly believing that it will continue and will have a noteworthy political and diplomatic impact on that issue. We share the opinion that the frequent contacts of this Group with the actors within Kosovo, as well as its cooperation with the Security Council, will significantly help the political process to determine Kosovo's final status.

While praising the peaceful and voluntary surrender of Mr. Ramush Haradinaj to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), we agree that the momentum of transition to the new Government, led by Prime Minister Bajram Kosumi, is another clear sign of the growing maturity and effectiveness of the political class and institutions in Kosovo. These three months, as noted in the Secretary-General's report, have demonstrated the determination of the new Government of Mr. Kosumi and the leadership of President Rugova to maintain the momentum on standards implementation.

The year 2005 is a crucial and significant one for Kosovo and the Balkans. As we all agree, the time has come for important and substantial progress in determining Kosovo's political status. The status quo is neither desirable nor useful. We strongly believe that this process will help Kosovo's rapid progress, economy and prosperity, will generate security and stability and will promote the advancement of the whole region, in line with the European countries.

The process of regular reviews of the progress on standards now indicates significant momentum. We fully share the Secretary-General's recommendation to initiate a comprehensive review this summer, bearing in mind, as he notes, the progress on the eight standards and the tireless efforts made thus far by Kosovo's Provisional Institutions. All this will naturally lead to a process of determining Kosovo's status.

We reaffirm our understanding that the implementation of the standards is a complex and ongoing process that will lead towards a democratic, stable and multi-ethnic society in Kosovo, with democratic institutions and effective guarantees for the protection of minorities and of the cultural and religious heritage. Implementation of standards is and will remain the central focus of the efforts of all the people of Kosovo to live in dignity and move forward towards Euro-Atlantic integration. I think it is worth recalling what Ambassador Kai Eide noted in his comprehensive report (S/2004/932, annex I, enclosure) of one year ago: we are moving to a "standards with status" approach, which in our opinion remains realistic and adequate.

We strongly believe that a multi-ethnic and democratic society in Kosovo remains the ultimate goal. For that purpose, the continued commitment of Kosovo institutions to decentralization, minority issues, good governance and the economy remains a priority.

Decentralization is one of the key issues and is beneficial to all citizens of Kosovo. In particular, it will advance the rights of minorities, and it will also strengthen local initiatives and help the economic, social and cultural development of all communities. We hold the view that decentralization should occur in parallel with the shaping and the strengthening of the central Government structures, that the autonomy of local authorities should not escape or harm the vertical line of power, that local structures must remain accountable to Pristina and that parallel structures must be integrated into Kosovo's structure or dismantled.

Above all, decentralization should avoid cantonization, which would impede the normal functioning of a multi-ethnic society in Kosovo.

The issue of minorities, which is a basic element of a multi-ethnic society, demands the engagement of all relevant actors in Kosovo: governmental institutions and civil society, as well as the Serb and other minorities. We commend the real progress and positive steps already achieved, but we encourage further attention and harder work in that area and further efforts to revitalize the return process, expand the inter-community dialogue and respect minority rights.

Meeting those objectives requires the continuous commitment of the Kosovo leadership, as well as goodwill and participatory efforts on the part of the Serb and other ethnic communities. The Serb minority's self-exclusion and its non-participation in the Assembly and other institutions only impede progress on standards. The Serb minority is part of Kosovo society, and as such, it has both rights and obligations. It should offer constructive engagement and end its isolation.

Good governance is a priority objective for the governing institutions of Kosovo. Establishment of the rule of law, the creation of an independent judiciary and a public administration and respect for private property are indispensable in that regard.

Meeting those standards requires that more competences and responsibilities be transferred to the local authorities and that privatization be accelerated. That process would have a positive impact on economic development and on the climate for foreign investment in Kosovo. Given its current political status, Kosovo remains a long way from direct foreign investment and lacks eligibility for benefiting from International Monetary Fund and World Bank programmes and assistance, which would have a direct impact on the development of a stable and efficient economy.

The Albanian Government thinks that the process of discussing and defining the status of Kosovo has to take into consideration some basic elements that will undoubtedly lead to a long-term solution with a positive impact on stability, security and the Euro-Atlantic integration of the region. We share the broadly held view that the basic principles that have already been identified and recognized can guide the settlement of this issue.

In that context, we reaffirm that respect for the democratically expressed free will of all people of Kosovo with respect to their future, together with guarantees for the respect and the protection of minority rights, including guarantees for the protection of their inherited cultural and religious values, remains crucial for a just and stable solution.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Covic, President of the Coordination Centre of Serbia and Montenegro and of the Republic of Serbia for Kosovo and Metohija.

Mr. Covic (Serbia and Montenegro) (*spoke in Serbian; interpretation provided by the delegation*): I thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to participate in the discussion. I just wish to address some of the points I have heard.

It was said that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) can motivate the Albanians to engage in the decentralization process once the Special Representative convinces them that Kosovo will not be partitioned. We believe that is true. However, in that same way we can motivate the Serbs to participate in the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government by convincing them that Kosovo and Metohija will not become independent. But how are we to do that when, on a daily basis, those Institutions propose independence as a solution? We have to ask ourselves why Serbs would enter institutions committed to the independence of Kosovo and Metohija. Thus, I call on officials of UNMIK and the international community to convince the Serbs that Kosovo and Metohija will not become independent and that the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of Serbia and Montenegro will be respected. That way, Kosovo Serbs can be persuaded to participate in the institutions of Kosovo and Metohija.

I wish to remind the Council that Kosovo Serbs participated in those institutions after the 2001 elections. They participated in 2002 and 2003, and through March 2004. The same old story went on again and again, and I had an opportunity to hear it. We were told to persuade them to enter the Provisional Institutions. We tried to do that. What happened in the end? The events of 17 March 2004 took place. And the consequences of the ethnic cleansing have not been remedied to date. Of the 4,500 persons who were internally displaced following 17 March, 1,600 have not yet returned to their homes. I have no intention of telling the Council nice stories with happy endings. I only wish to be realistic, whether the Council likes it or not. That is why I think the statement of the United Kingdom was incorrect and unfair. Please, do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

With respect to the freedom of movement, the real test of whether there is freedom of movement comes when those people go back to their schools. What kind of freedom of movement is there when children need military escorts to go to school? Of course, we are grateful for everything UNMIK and the Kosovo Force (KFOR) have done. I would not like my statement to lead to the removal of the KFOR presence, because there is no freedom of movement. We should all commit ourselves to solving this problem. We generally agree that the future status of Kosovo and Metohija can influence regional stability and trade, but a one-sided solution to the problem of Kosovo and Metohija would be a very poor compromise. That is a topic for discussion between Belgrade and Pristina. A compromise on the future status of Kosovo and Metohija would create the conditions for dialogue and free trade in the region and would be accepted by our neighbours as well.

Of course, finding a peaceful, comprehensive and lasting solution takes time. Our discussion today concerning the difficulties of implementing the standards clearly indicates that it is not possible to solve the issue of the status of Kosovo and Metohija in an accelerated fashion.

I should also like to draw attention to incorrect and untrue views asserting that for some internally displaced persons, the fear of a lack of economic opportunities, not the fear of the lack of security, is the factor discouraging return.

I therefore ask: Why should a person return to his house, farm or apartment unless he can be assured of surviving? If there are economic reasons preventing the return of Serbs, they are of secondary importance and easily solved. I must stress, however, that we cannot divert our attention from UNMIK's lack of activity on the main issue. We will be very constructive in our approach, but must not be expected to hide our heads in the sand.

The President: I shall now give the floor to Mr. Jessen-Petersen to respond to the comments.

Mr. Jessen-Petersen: Allow me first to thank the members of the Security Council for their observations and their very strong statements of support for the ongoing process in Kosovo and in the region.

I also would like to express my appreciation for the statements expressing support for the Secretary-General's recommendations to launch the comprehensive review this summer. I fully agree with those many statements underlining that such a review must indeed be comprehensive, thorough and objective, and I can only say here that, obviously, the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) will support that exercise so that we can achieve the objective, which is one we all share.

I would also like to welcome the many statements that rightly have underlined that the situation in Kosovo is a very complex one. It is not a situation that can described in black and white; it is full of nuances. That is exactly why the Secretary-General's report and, I would underline, my own technical assessment try to present what one member of the Council referred to as a mixed picture.

But I want to assure the Security Council that I know that the leaders of Kosovo have heard their statements today loud and clear. They have heard, first, that they need to make further demonstrable progress in order to move forward. They have heard, secondly, that they need to redouble and intensify their efforts to address, in particular, the shortcomings that we all recognize and that I also referred to in my opening remarks, notably in the areas of return and freedom of movement, and overall to improve the conditions and the protection of minorities. Thirdly, I can assure the Council that the leaders in Kosovo have heard, loud and clear, that the outcome of the comprehensive review is not a foregone conclusion. I assure the Council because I know that, for the leaders and citizens of Kosovo, the implementation of standards is not only a requirement for moving forward on the process leading us into status discussions. It is much more; above all, for the political parties and citizens of Kosovo, standards implementation is, equally and maybe even more importantly, a matter of building up a European society that is democratic and multi-ethnic and where the minorities are protected and the religious and cultural sites of importance to the minorities are preserved and protected.

I would, with your permission, Sir, say a few words in response to the first and second statements of my friend Mr. Covic. I do feel that the statements may not always have reflected the fact that we are dealing with a very complex situation in which there are no blacks and whites. I thought it might be helpful if I were to add a couple of points, so that maybe we can get more than one side on some of the important issues. Out of respect for the Council's time, however, let me just cite three or four examples.

First of all, Mr. Covic mentioned as an example of freedom of movement being respected on the Kosovo Serb side that one Albanian Resident, a judge in northern Mitrovica, goes to work every day. I think that is good. Let me just say here — and the statistics are clear — that 10 per cent of all public servants are minorities, and the large majority of those are Kosovo Serbs. The large majority of those minority public servants move to work every day.

Secondly, Mr. Covic expressed concern over the quality of democracy in a place where the minority — the Kosovo Serbs — risks being outvoted. I would say that I find that the most important aspect of democracy is indeed that one participates, exercises the rights of a democracy and votes. I think we should worry about voting before we start worrying about being outvoted. Furthermore, as I have discussed many times with Belgrade, I still regret that the Kosovo Serbs did not participate in the elections, because if they had participated at the level they did during the last elections, Kosovo Serbs would today have the second largest political party in Kosovo, and the risk of being outvoted would not have been there.

Thirdly, on the International Telecommunication Union, I know this is a matter that was raised here in the Council in February. Let me just say very briefly that UNMIK has acted, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and on the basis of absolutely unambiguous advice from the Legal Adviser of the Secretary-General, to seek an independent code for Kosovo on an interim basis. We are doing that for purely economic purposes. The very weak economy of Kosovo loses approximately €50 million on an annual basis because all the profits of telephone communications today go to quarters outside Kosovo.

The fourth point I want to make is on the Kosovo Forum. I want to reassure Mr. Covic and the members of the Council that the moment that the Kosovo Serbs are encouraged to take their seats in the democratic institutions, they will, of course, be invited to join the Forum, but we cannot invite them into the Forum as along as they are not members of the Assembly, because we have invited the political parties represented in the Assembly.

I also want to make the very evident point that, when it comes to preparing for status discussions, that is the responsibility of the institutions in Kosovo. It is not the responsibility of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. My mandate is clear. My mandate is to facilitate the process, but status preparations must be the exclusive responsibilities of the authorities and the political parties in Kosovo, and will indeed be so.

Finally, Mr. Covic said that there had been no response to the invitations for dialogue from President Tadic and Prime Minister Kostunica. As I said in my opening statement, I very much welcome those invitations. Mr. Covic's statement is not entirely correct. The invitation from President Tadic was a public one and Mr. Rugova has publicly confirmed that he is looking forward to meeting him. The Prime Minister wrote the letter of invitation eventually, inviting Prime Minister Kosumi. Prime Minister Kosumi responded in a letter welcoming the dialogue and I believe that they will meet shortly.

Let me conclude by thanking you, Sir, for presiding over this Council meeting, which I believe will go down in history as a very important one that will move forward the process in the western Balkans, in Kosovo in particular; that will move the region and Kosovo closer towards normalization and stabilization; and that will allow all the States in the region, and Kosovo too, to focus all their efforts on what must be the goal of everybody in the region: European integration.

The President: There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.